

DISSERTATION
ON THE PERNICIOUS EFFECTS OF
GAMING.

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"Strenua nos exerceat Inertia."

HOR. EP.

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A DISSERTATION

ON THE PRINCIPLES OF THE

G. A. M. I. N. G.



Entered at Stationers Hall.

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A D I S S E R T A T I O N

ON THE PERNICIOUS EFFECTS OF

G A M I N G.

COULD we for a moment suppose it to be any man's Duty, by some positive injunction divine or human, to make the Gaming Table his constant Occupation; — if so circumstanced he should discharge that Duty with alacrity and a chearful perseverance, supporting an even temper in all his great and sudden changes of fortune, we could not hesitate in applauding him. So trying a situation, so well filled, could not fail to command our Respect and Admiration, as it would denote a truly philosophical spirit.

But let us take away the circumstance of his being *injoined* to follow this mode of life, and the case is now altered. Howsoever we may be struck with his equanimity, we must at least lose our respect for one who is daily exposing the firmness of his mind to the severest shocks, without any laudable End to allege in excuse of his temerity. — Will he say that it is needless to urge any End of his pursuit besides the Amusement

A

which

which he finds in the pursuit itself? Surely he cannot be in earnest; or else he has forgot the vast fund of amusement provided for Man by Nature, which has given him such a variety of powers capable of being exerted in such a variety of ways. To see a Being thus furnished, who yet relinquishes all his own powers, and flies to what is mere matter of Chance, which can neither gratify his natural Appetites, please his Imagination, nor exercise his Ingenuity to any good purpose, is to behold an object truly *ridiculous*.

Our Ridicule however must give way to more serious thoughts, when we reflect upon the great Imprudence of him who ventures his Fortune, or any considerable part of it, upon the throw of a Die. And these thoughts, serious as they are, will be lost in yet more serious ones, if we attend to what more immediately affects the Gamester in his own Person, if we look into his Mind and Feelings, harassed by a series of violent agitations, and in a manner excluded from all the common delights of life. Here we might rest, in a sentiment of Pity for a man thus miserable; were we not led still further, to see him as abandoning all true principles of Virtue and Benevolence, and in consequence bringing Distress and Misery upon those who are connected with him by private or public ties; — closing perhaps the tragedy which he has been acting,

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with

with an untimely Death, by the hand of some reputed friend, or by his own.

Such are the *general* ideas arising from a view of the Gamester's life. But it is necessary to descend to Particulars. In doing which, although there might be ample room to expose the practice of Gaming as in itself trifling and ridiculous, for the employment of a Being like Man, yet it seems proper to follow more closely the Subject proposed, which confines us to the *Effects* of Gaming.

I. Let us take first the Effects upon the Gamester's *Fortune*. And, to limit Effects upon the Fortune. ourselves the more strictly, under this head, to the charge of Imprudence, let us for the present conceive his Fortune as intended purely for his own Enjoyment, excluding all the claims which are commonly allowed to spring from ties of blood or other connexions.

There is something in the particular Expense not limited. nature of this expense, which strongly marks its difference from all other kinds of expense; which is, that it knows no Limit. Look at any other species of prodigality; and you will discern a kind of natural boundary, beyond which the Prodigal, though unrestrained by principle, has no Temptation to go. The man who, either through Gluttony or Ostentation, adds a second Course to his Table, by no means lies afterwards under the same temptation to add a third.

third. It is not only true, but must be clearly perceived to be so by the veriest Glutton and the most vainly ostentatious, that their respective enjoyments will not be increased by a third course added to the two, so much as by a second added to the first; — and not only not so much, but even far less than in proportion to the increase of expense. Or, if a third course be still contended for, and even a fourth, yet, without fixing where the limit is, we may safely affirm that there must be one, beyond which all expense would be totally lost as to the end proposed by it, and would make a man ridiculous even in the eyes of the most extravagant. This is applicable to other kinds of expense; Houses, Apparel, Equipages, and so on. And this is true not only as to the Number, but the Quality also. In every common article of expense, there exists either a highest Quality and Excellence, which nothing *can* exceed, or one which it would answer no *End* to exceed, as nothing would be added by it to the sensual enjoyment or to the reputation of Shew and Magnificence. — But when the expense comes to be that of Money staked upon a board, all limits seem to vanish, and the whole train of ideas to be changed. If we conceive a man to play through Avarice, he is naturally led on by considering, that the larger sum he stakes the larger he will take up in case he wins; if to display his Wealth, he constantly feels that the greater

greater number of rouleaus he lays down, the greater man he appears, and that the figure he makes is ever in proportion to the number of them deposited. Or, if he plays without any distinct motive, through mere habit or blind infatuation, the same power which has carried him one length will carry him another, if *he* is weak enough to be carried on by it: there is not a check in the nature of the thing itself, as there is in other expenses; so long as he has supplies of Cash or Credit, the number of guineas for which he may play is unlimited, like the arithmetical figures that will express them; and the advance from a smaller stake to a larger seems as natural amongst thousands of pounds as amongst hundreds or units.

In vain would the Gamester contend that all this is nothing to the purpose, by alleging that the *prudent* man will risque no sum the loss of which can materially affect his fortune, and that if the *imprudent* man does otherwise, he is to be blamed as imprudent rather than as a Gamester. It is answered; we all know that there are many persons in the world imprudent enough to spend their money as far as there are temptations to draw them on, in their particular line of expense. If then there is one line of expense, as Gaming, which (having in itself no natural check to its excesses) does perpetually present successive temptations beyond

This is directly
chargeable upon
Gaming.

all bounds; this in its own nature is evidently deserving of censure, and a man's imprudence at the Gaming Table is not to be confounded with any general charge of imprudence against him as a Man. Nor has the Gamester any reason to expect that he shall have more self-command to stop where he pleases, than the profuse in any other article of expense. Indeed it might appear otherwise to one who was coolly considering the nature of Play; as there is clearly no encouragement to him who plays fair, to hope for Gain upon the whole: — but confirmed experience tells us that people are in fact hurried on by the temptations of the Gaming Table, as strongly at least as by those of any other species of prodigality.

Fallacy
exposed.

There is a great Fallacy with regard to the playing upon an equality of Chance, which deserves to be well considered. It may be thought, that if a man plays upon an equal chance of loss and gain, or lays the odds that are justified by mathematical calculation, he runs no risk for which he can be blamed on the score of Prudence. But the contrary may be shewn. Not that the Fallacy is of any consequence in the small sums which are frequently played for in a domestic game at Cards; but it is of very great importance when the stake is a large part of a man's fortune. Let us suppose a person worth six thousand guineas to go to the
Hazard

Hazard Table, and that as soon as a Main is thrown he sets upon it three thousand guineas; in strictness he has some small odds in his favour, but for the present argument we may very well suppose him to play upon an equality of chance; so that his Expectation is worth three thousand guineas, being precisely of the same value with his own stake; and, mathematically speaking, we must allow him to play without either advantage or disadvantage. But if we attend to the Consequences of his winning and losing, respectively, we shall see the thing in a different light. If he wins, he raises his fortune to *nine* thousand guineas; and therefore it is increased in the proportion of three to two. If he loses, he reduces it to *three* thousand guineas; and therefore it is diminished in the proportion of two to one. So that he has but the same chance for increasing his fortune in one proportion, which he runs of diminishing it in a much greater. Wherefore, although he is upon equal terms with the person against whom he plays, yet, in respect of his own increase or diminution of Happiness, he certainly plays to disadvantage. For it is far from being true that one and the same sum of money, added to a man's fortune in one case, and taken from it in another, will affect him equally in the two cases. — It may even be maintained further, that if, instead of a certain *Sum* added to his fortune or

Disadvantage
in Gaming.

taken from it, there be a certain *Proportion* in which it is increased or diminished, still he would game to disadvantage. To shew this, let us resume the former case, supposing only that, instead of staking three thousand guineas upon the same footing as before, the Gamester shall now have (what certainly no Adversary would allow him) an equal chance for raising and for reducing his fortune in a certain proportion, namely of three to two, by raising it to *nine* thousand or reducing it to *four* thousand: — we are to examine whether even upon this favourable supposition he does not still in reality game to disadvantage.

The simplest and fairest way of taking the matter, is to conceive him as having hitherto lived upon his former fortune, (I mean its yearly produce), and after making this one alteration in it by winning the *three* thousand or losing the *two* thousand, coming then to live upon his increased or diminished fortune: that we may judge whether the winning would add to his enjoyment as much as the losing would take from it. If he loses, he is reduced immediately to live upon *four* thousand, two thirds of his former fortune. Of consequence, he must retrench one third of his expenses. The Habits and Expectations which he had gradually formed, and which were become natural to him, must meet with constant checks and disappointments. We
are

are all, creatures of Habit and Custom. The Food, Apparel, Attendance, the Habitations, the Conveniences, and even the Ornaments of Life, such as we have constantly enjoyed, — these we look for daily as things of Course; and we do not so much feel a positive happiness in the enjoyment of them, as a Poverty, Vacuity, and even positive Misery, in the want of them. And above all these, perhaps, is the being obliged, either to quit the society of those with whom we have been accustomed to keep company as Equals, or else to remain amongst them upon a different footing; and moreover, to admit as our Equals those whom we have hitherto justly looked upon as our Inferiors. There are indeed who can, and with chearfulness too, settle themselves in a station lower than what they have been used to, — who with a certain dignity of contentment can enter into a new character, and with a good grace seem to forget that they ever had higher claims. But for such as these you must look amongst men reduced by their Misfortunes, not their Follies. The man who has wantonly and unprovokedly at the Gaming Table resigned his money into the hands of Fortune, for her in her caprice either to restore it to him or give it to another, has no internal support under his distress; he has nothing to allege, to his friends or himself, which may operate to sooth and gratify the feelings of an unfortunate man, or which can fairly solicit
the

the regard of the compassionate. — Such seems to be the consequence of his *losing*. On the other hand, if he *wins*, he has now an additional fortune of three thousand guineas: and if this will produce an addition to his enjoyment, equivalent to the distress suffered on the losing side, we must then allow that he plays without disadvantage. But the contrary will appear, upon a little reflexion. Money is not Happiness. It is not (generally speaking) the immediate *Means* of happiness: at the best, it serves only to procure those means. And here it is to be observed, that the Prices of all the reputed means of happiness keep rising in much higher proportions successively, as you advance into the higher ranks of life. So that, to enable a person of a thousand a Year, and one of a hundred a year, to alter their several ways of life equally, to the eye of the world, would require very different additions to be made to their fortunes. And though the nature of the thing does not admit of any strict calculation, yet we may venture to assert that the addition requisite to be made to the greater fortune must be at least in proportion to the fortune itself. Therefore, in the case proposed, the winning of *three* thousand guineas and the losing of *two* thousand may be looked upon as equivalent, in their effects upon the external and reputed means of happiness. But the Gamester's disadvantage will appear still greater, if we

we now come to the point of real Enjoyment. There is always previously required a Disposition, or power of Perception, suited to the Object we are in possession of, and capable of drawing Enjoyment out of it. Here, again, we are the Creatures of Habit and Custom. You would in vain supply any one with money to purchase Pictures of the best kind, if he has not been used to Painting sufficiently for enjoying them more than an inferior sort; or, to procure musical instruments or pay public Performers, if he can neither play himself nor taste the performances of others; or, to get richer Cloaths or a more magnificent House than his habitual feelings will allow him to wear and to live in with ease and comfort to himself; or, lastly, to gain admittance into Company of such a Rank or Cast as his former life does not enable him to relish. I would however by no means assert that an increase of fortune may not, with proper management, be made to yield an increase of enjoyment. But it seems clearly to operate much more feebly and uncertainly in producing that effect, than a diminution of fortune operates in producing a contrary effect. Therefore, upon the whole, we may fairly conclude that, in point of real enjoyment or happiness, the Gamester, in the case proposed, will be a greater Sufferer if he loses the *two* thousand guineas, than a Gainer if he wins the *three* thousand. And it is evident

evident that he must play to much greater disadvantage in the case as *first* proposed, where he staked three thousand guineas upon an equality of Chance.

There is the same Fallacy in laying the Odds. For instance, at Hazard, if the Main be Seven and the Caster's Chance Four, the true mathematical Odds are two to one in favour of the Setter. Yet it would be highly imprudent to risque any considerable part of one's fortune upon such Odds, for the like reasons as just now explained. We may just remark that, in such a case, the laying of *four* thousand guineas to *two* thousand seems chargeable with a greater degree of imprudence than the staking of *three* thousand upon an equality of chance; because a greater part of one's fortune is risked: and, by parity of reasoning, *taking* those Odds would be imprudent in a *less* degree. Though, certainly, to lay those Odds, to take them, and to stake money upon an equality of Chance, are all to be called, Gaming without any disadvantage, while we view the thing in a mere mathematical light.

If, instead of supposing that the Gain or Loss arises from a single Stake or Wager, we put the case of money won or lost at different times, by playing for smaller sums, the Fallacy that has been here exposed is still the same, provided what is won or lost goes to the same extent in the whole. And if, by continuing the

Gamester's

Gamester's life for a length of time, a man exceeds (as it much too frequently happens) the comparatively moderate bounds in the case above stated, the reasoning which shews the imprudence of such a course, holds but the more strongly. — It is a melancholy

Condition of a
Person reduced.

picture, to see a person who had been born to a high rank, and was once possessed of an estate of ten or twenty thousand pounds a year, now reduced to some poor pittance which in his days of prosperity and prudence he would have considered only as running cash, to answer the trivial demands of every day. Let us attend a moment to the situation into which he has brought himself. He has intirely lost the power of living with *Independence* in the rank to which he has been accustomed. If then he does at all preserve the appearance of the same rank, it must be either through means at which Honour and Honesty would blush, or through some great stroke of good fortune, (as by advancement in the State, great bounty of Friends, or the like,) which in its nature is extraordinary, and not to be trusted to beforehand as a resource, without consummate imprudence and folly. If, on the contrary, he submits fairly to the evil which he has brought upon himself, and without evasion settles himself in a subordinate rank of life; this presents us with the true idea of his Loss, and is to be compared and contrasted

trasted with the condition to which he would have been raised, had luck run on his side as much as it did in fact run against him. There is not an article of expense, nor an accommodation, in which he must not submit to a total change. His Habitation, his Apparel, his Food, will strike his eye with a Glare of meanness, and shock his habitual feelings, every day or every hour. If he says to himself, I have still enough for Nature, nay I have more than thousands whom I see following their daily labours with chearfulness and content; still the acquired Cravings of Habit will feel a perpetual Void, and make him miserable in spite of all he can say. He is in a manner excluded from Society; — from the company which he has been used to keep, by the inferiority of his present rank, and from the company which he might now keep, by the total Unsuitableness between them and himself. His time must hang like a heavy load upon him, for want of employment; unless perhaps, what may be equally grievous, he be driven to some Labour, mental or bodily, for procuring an addition to his slender support. I will not trace out this picture more minutely; but leave it to every one's own conceptions. It seems, however, material to note the prodigious disadvantage of the Gamester in his Play: he has nothing to balance the risque of reducing himself to this abject condition, but the chance (equal to that

that risque) of rising into one in which he could only add splendor to splendor, and heap on more where there was already *Abundance*. If he has success, he doubles indeed an ample fortune; but if otherwise, he sinks to what a man of such fortune may, without much rhetorical figure, call *Nothing*.

The difference between such Loss as we have just been considering and a reduction to absolute Nothing, is so trifling in comparison of the whole loss, that it might be tedious to make it here the subject of a separate consideration. And, as to the case of playing upon Credit beyond the extent of a man's fortune, this seems rather to fall under a different Head, and will on that account be mentioned more properly in another place: — except indeed this one remark, that these Debts, like all others, anticipate a person's future acquisitions, and under that idea they exhibit him to us in a lower situation, than he appears in as only being stripped of every thing he had.

Further: independent of the Disad- ^{Sharpers.} vantage thus shewn to be essential to the practice of Gaming in its very nature, there is a great additional Disadvantage arising from the danger of falling into the hands of Sharpers. Every person who has much to do with the world, is exposed to *some* danger of this sort, occasionally, in various occurrences of life: but the Gaming
Table

Table is the peculiar province of this noted Fraternity. Hitherto we have supposed a man engaged only with an Adversary who would play upon the Square, as it is called ; so that Chance alone has been the Arbiter of his fate : — no false Dice, no smooth Boxes, no Sleight of hand to cog a die or hide a card, no Stamp, Dribble, or Long Gallery. But let any one recollect the amazing rapidity of execution which the human hand is capable of acquiring : — there are few who have not seen this exemplified in public exhibitions of tricks by sleight of hand. A Knight of the Industry, equipped with such powers as these, and gaining admittance into the society of Gentlemen who play fair, will (it is easy to conceive) make great depredations in whatever cash they may chuse to venture upon the board. And Gentlemen who play fair would do well to remember, that the Loss they suffer from Sharpers is not like a run of bad Luck, which may chance to be made up to them by a run of good Luck at another time. The fair Player who ventures incautiously among Strangers, or persons not sufficiently known to him, suffers (almost of necessity) when those persons happen to be Sharpers ; and when he is fortunate enough to fall into better hands, he is still only upon even terms with his Adversary, which is no compensation for what he suffers at another time from unfair Play. The Risque then
which

which on this particular score is run by the fair Player, being entirely distinct from the Disadvantage of Play in general, explained above; we are to combine them together in our minds, in order to complete our idea of the Imprudence of this practice.

And certainly, upon the whole, ^{The Imprudence of Gaming, very great.} it is such a degree of Imprudence as must astonish any one who has been at all used to regulate his conduct upon prudential maxims. In commercial concerns, it is the study of the Merchant to avoid every risque that is not necessary to the end he has in view; and wherever he can diminish his risque, he does it by Insurances and all the methods of Caution which he can devise: — where he exposes himself to any hazard, it is as to a necessary Evil, for the sake of a greater Good connected with it. But the Gamester has the appearance of seeking the Risque for its own sake. With regard to so much as the Balance has been shewn to be against him, he acts like the man who should for mere amusement trust a share of his property to the mercy of the Waves or Pirates, without hoping for any return.

So much for the *direct* Imprudence of Gaming: — but we must not pass ^{Incidental Expense.} over the *incidental* expense which usually attends it. He who has habituated his mind to be familiar with hundreds and thousands, and has

learned with some share of Stoical indifference to let a pretty large stake pass from him or return into his possession, may be apt to overlook *this* expense. He would do better to remember that, whatever his fate be in other respects, this is a constant Tax upon him, a clear and certain Deduction from his Gain, or Addition to his Loss. Perhaps indeed there are some, of so ample revenues, that they may fairly with prudence excuse themselves from any great attention to this point: but certainly there is a much greater number from whom it merits a very serious consideration. Men of narrow fortunes, men who from inferior stations gain admittance into company of the highest, upon the footing of Gamblers, lie under the strongest temptations to transgress in many common articles of expense the bounds which their real situation in life has prescribed to them. The expenses of a tavern or club-house may very easily fall within the limits of a great man's purse, at the same time that they are extravagance in the persons just described, who resort to the same house for the sake of gaming. And, in other articles also, they are drawn on naturally, by Imitation, to exceed their just expenses in a degree which must lead to ruin or, what is worse, some dishonest way of preventing it. They are accustomed to see Dress (for instance), such as among *their* equals would look rich even to magnificence,
made

made use of as necessary cloathing ; so that it no longer solicits the eye as being of any superior quality. The consequence is, that the Apparel which is properly suited to their own rank ceases to suggest the idea of ornamental or comfortable ; they see it as mean and paltry ; and, forgetting the difference of conditions, they come to persuade themselves that even common decency requires they should wear, what they observe to make upon their Superiors so natural and simple an appearance. The same is applicable to other particulars of expense.

This folly rises to a still greater height in some ; who, not content with equalling their Superiors, are resolved to *surpass* them in Magnificence and Expense. The attempt, by this Excess to make up for Defects in birth, accomplishments, manners, or merit of whatever kind, must be fruitless as well as imprudent.

There is one Expense, brought on frequently by Gaming, which deserves to be particularly mentioned ; as it cannot safely be overlooked by persons possessed even of a large fortune : — I mean that incurred by raising money upon usurious terms. I need not undertake to display at large the artifices of Extortion practised upon the necessities of the Gamester, nor the singular Weakness of one who submits to raise money upon terms so hard, for a purpose in itself so ruinous as the traffic of the Hazard Table.

ble. The *direct* Imprudence of Gaming is so great, that, when we had seen a man allowing himself to be guilty of it, we could not be surprised at his advancing this step further, to hasten a sinking Fortune to its destined Nothing.

Misery suffered by the Gamester.

II. I will now quit the consideration of the Effects of Gaming upon the *Fortune* of the Gamester, and proceed to those which affect immediately his Person, his Mind, and Feelings. And here we shall see exhibited before us a copious Misery, arising from perverseness worse than childish: — a rational creature neglecting or throwing away the Goods which a bounteous hand has placed within his reach, and diligently picking out for himself the Ills of life from Fortune's miscellaneous heap.

Different Degrees of it.

There are indeed Degrees of this misery, as will appear in the Detail of it: it must by no means be affirmed, that the whole of it is the consequence of the inferior degrees of Gaming. No: it follows in a more equitable and impartial manner the perverse choice of him who draws it upon himself. Let no one, who has already had even a large portion of it, conclude that there is no greater in reserve for him, — that he has endured the worst, and may now advance as far as he pleases, without fearing an increase to his misery.

Various Sources.

1. I am to attempt then a detail of various particulars, which constitute so many

ny Sources of misery to the Gamester. — First, the practice of Gaming bids fair to injure the Health. This it does, in com- ^{Health impaired.} mon with some other Causes, by occupying those hours which would be better given to some manly exercise, or those which Nature has evidently designed for refreshing the bodies and all the faculties of men by sleep. But it produces this effect more particularly, by giving perpetual occasion to violent Passions, which agitate, harass, and disorder the whole human frame, and which will be mentioned by and by, as themselves also the *immediate* cause of great misery. It is an acknowledged point, that an undue Agitation of the mind is highly prejudicial to the Health. And experience shews, that Health is a necessary ingredient of human happiness; as without it we are not able to preserve a true relish for the enjoyments of life. So that, besides what is suffered directly, by Pain and Sickness, here is a constant diminution of our daily enjoyments. — Add to this the forlorn state, in point of dress and external appearance, in which it is not uncommon to return from the midnight toils and cares of Gaming, at an hour when a wiser part of the world are rising from their beds to Cleanliness and Action. This is hurtful to the Health, and is accompanied with feelings so languid and disconsolate as surely no one could easily be brought to endure,

who has experienced habitually the Alertness and (as I may say) Elasticity of the Mind, when all its powers after their natural refreshment wake to new exertions.

Relaxation
not obtained.

Relaxation is an end which might be supposed to be aimed at in Gaming. But, in the manner and degree in which Gaming is pursued, it must produce an effect very different from Relaxation. The professed Gamester is a man of *Business*. And his Business contains not the advantages either of those occupations which relax and please, or of those which strengthen and improve: the former sort must be such as exercise the Attention much more gently than Gaming does; and the latter must have some useful object in view, or call forth the faculties to some steady rational exertions, totally unlike the wild and irregular emotions which agitate the Gamester. The pleasures of the Imagination are, with a peculiar propriety, recommended by Mr. Addison for the purpose of relaxing. And we can scarcely conceive any thing a stronger contrast to these, than deep Play. Not even the ordinary occupations by which men earn a livelihood, are so strongly contrasted to them: if an employment be ever so dull and mechanical, at least it is usually mixed with some casual strokes which now and then light up a momentary brightness in the Imagination. But the rigid Silence required in deep Play,

Play, and the total exclusion of all ideas besides those of Main and Chance and the rest of the same class, debar the mind from every pleasing picture, (except what a vicious taste has made to be pleasing,) and chain it down to a Drudgery which would be galling to a very Slave. —

I will go down thought at the Hazard table, says the Gamester: but he is mistaken. This thought indeed, or that thought, in particular, he *may* drown: but he is sure still to have his mind exercised by thought, both severe in its degree and hurtful in its kind. So far then is Play from refreshing the mind after past labours and preparing it for the renewal of them, that it is actually a severe labour, and thus comes to occupy the place of useful pursuits; requiring some recreation to succeed it, instead of being itself a recreation.

But it even disqualifies a man for enjoying what the rest of the world Enjoyment prevented. make use of for Recreations. Experience bears witness, (strange as it may appear to a cool spectator,) that an attachment to Play is often one of the strongest attachments that lay hold of the human mind. And it is also found by experience that any very strong Attachment is apt to draw one away from every thing else. To take an instance; the schemes of the sanguine Projector, whether in Politics, Trade, or other matters, engross him in such a manner that

he has scarcely a relish for any enjoyment which is not in some way or other connected with his favourite object. In the same manner, a passion for Play will seize upon the whole man and govern him with the most imperious tyranny. You can present him with no objects which can fix him, but his Imagination will ever be running on the Dice: he can conceive no felicity higher than to nick a Main; nor can any accident befall him more grievous than to throw Ames-ace. Should you invite such a one to feast his eyes and delight his soul with the beauties exhibited in the face of Nature, or with the sublime conceptions of a Raphael or Michael Angelo, to charm his ears and harmonize all his feelings by the ravishing sounds of Music, or to chase away every gloomy thought by the mild cheerfulness of easy Conversation; you would be doing something not unlike bidding a man benumbed in all his senses with the palsy, to enjoy his food, the air, and every thing around him, as when in perfect health.

To form an estimate of the Loss of the Gamester, by examining all the particulars of the Enjoyment which his Passion for Play thus excludes him from, both arising from Nature and supplied by Art, both what he might procure as a separate Individual, and what comes within his reach by his connexions in civilized Society, would be tedious; and would exceed
all

all bounds which I conceive to have been in any way intended by the generous and public-spirited Donor of the Prize. — I do not recollect any *one* instance, which will better shew at the same time the ^{Love of Play, prevailing over Love of the Fair Sex.} Strength of the passion and the Enjoyment it prevents, than its overcoming the attractions of the Female Sex. — When we reflect upon the great effects which are *commonly* produced by an attachment to some Individual of that sex, and the *astonishing* effects which are *sometimes* produced by it, we must own a prodigious Strength in that Passion which can destroy the power of it by its own superior force.

But the other point seems to fall more fairly under our consideration at ^{Enjoyment lost thereby.} present; namely, the Enjoyment which a passion for Play prevents by overcoming such attachments, the most natural to man. So natural indeed, and so common, in some degree or other, is an attachment to the fair sex, that a man perfectly devoid of it, though in the catalogue of men he may be numbered for one, must yet be reckoned as a Monster of his species. But, in this as in other things, there are innumerable Degrees of refinement and delicacy, which diversify the feelings of different men. And it is observable, that frequently those who have had a disposition the best fitted for taking delight in the conversation of the Fair, have become

become possessed with the strongest passion for Play. To account for this fully, might lead me too wide of my subject; but, to prevent any conclusion (by association of ideas) in favour of Gaming, I will refer to a well known position which is applicable to the best Minds as well as to other things the best of their kind, — that when abused they are apt to become the very worst. It is a most disgusting sight, to see a young man of good birth and education, of strong understanding and quick sensibility, of great accomplishments both in person and mind, rejecting perversely the happiness which all these qualifications reach out to him, — the happiness to be found in the society of young Women; while he reserves himself wholly for Cards, Dice, or an EO Table. We can scarcely deny him our pity for being drawn off by such sordid amusement, even from unwarrantable connexions with Women. How much less when we see him losing the refined and approved enjoyment of all that the sex affords of elegant, graceful, sprightly, exhilarating, tender, soothing! But, besides this intercourse with the sex at large, which is lost to him, he is still a greater loser by missing those manly though soft Feelings, that elevate and rouse to action while they humanize and delight, which attend the honourable and successful pursuit of some one *Individual* of that sex: — some one
sruited

sited to him by Nature, Education, and Rank, and qualified to accompany him through life as the partner of all his joys and griefs. — And it is not only by actually quitting the society of Women for that of Gamesters, that a young man is found thus to deprive himself of his natural happiness; but sometimes, though set down at the same card-table with the fairest of the Fair, if engaged in deep Play, he will forget all distinction of Sex, and give himself up to the hard and cheerless ideas of Chance and Calculation, while there sits before him an object naturally fitted to call up the softest and most agreeable emotions of the mind. — Thus does he become blind to the charms which were intended for his delight; and thus does this artificial appetite (for so we may properly call the Love of Play) absorb the natural inclinations and perceptions which were meant to lead him to his earthly happiness.

Of a kindred sort to the last-men- Conversation, tioned enjoyment, is another which the Gamester either entirely deprives himself of or greatly diminishes: I mean the pleasure of Conversation in general. And the effect is produced in the same manner: namely, by suffering the ruling Passion for Play to occupy the whole man, and in consequence to stifle those emotions and those powers which create the enjoyment. When a man's mind is wholly taken up with one train of ideas,

ideas, he is but ill qualified to enter into that variety of topics which of course occur in common conversation. When moreover those ideas are of such a serious sort as those of the Gamester must be, who is risking every day some large portion of his property, — who is hoping perhaps ere long to have the fortune of a Prince, or fearing in as short a time to find himself a Beggar, — and when, by frequent repetition, ideas of this sort have taken full possession of the mind; it becomes fatal to that playfulness of the Imagination which contributes so much to promote an innocent mirth, and to increase the sociable feelings of man to man. To the rigidly serious and busy mind of the Gamester, all this sport of the fancy must appear impertinently trifling, merely through his own want of relish for it; although to the man of chearful virtue, who gives himself with industry to some useful employment, it is at proper times both pleasing and serviceable. — As for the *instructive* part of Conversation, though no doubt in this also much will be lost by a person who is wrapt up in one particular set of thoughts, yet since it does not seem quite so remote as the more *lively* part, from the severe habit of mind in the Gamester, I will not enlarge upon it. But it may be observed, that all the advantage and pleasure (whatever they be,) of Conversation, are entirely lost by a Person

son during the time that he is actually engaged in deep and serious Play : which is distinct from the inconvenience already considered, namely the effect produced in the mind by *habitual* Play, disqualifying it from entering properly into Conversation even when at leisure.

Conjugal, parental, and other domestic Affections, may be considered Domestic
Enjoyment. as forming together one plentiful and natural source of human felicity. And this the professed Gamester choaks up, or even converts into a source of Misery. That misery which he brings upon the persons connected with him by domestic ties, will come afterwards to be mentioned : at present we are engaged in that which he brings upon himself. And surely it is no trifle, to give up a fund of perpetual, of *daily* enjoyment. This is a circumstance that deserves well to be attended to. We are inclined, I believe, in general to over-rate both Pains and Pleasures which are violent in their degree and occur but seldom, in comparing them with those which are moderate but happen frequently. In a well-regulated Family, there are numberless slight touches of endearment, passing between the Members of it, even in the ordinary intercourse of every day, besides the more lively sensations produced by participating in the greater events of each other's life. These slighter touches constitute, by their frequency, a most substantial

substantial fund of enjoyment, and one which may be much better depended upon than more transporting joys : and, by long repetition, they generate attachments, or strengthen those which already exist, of a most pleasing as well as useful kind. And yet all this happiness is overlooked or rejected by the man who makes Play his business. Besides absenting himself very much from the placid scenes of domestic comfort, he unfits himself for enjoying them when present. That perpetual hankering after the Dice, which is ever gaining strength upon him, will be sure to unhinge him at home : — it will prevent his spirits from settling into that calm state which would invite him to the satisfactory enjoyment of what lies within his reach, in preference to the wild pursuit of Fortune's most capricious gifts abroad. — And also the Consciousness of having neglected those Friends who have the most natural claim to his company, will suspend him from resigning himself to mix perfectly in their society. If they receive him coolly, he will feel it a deserved punishment ; if kindly, he will (provided he has a spark of generosity left) feel himself ungenerous and shabby in his treatment of *them* in return. But if, besides all this, he has materially intrenched upon the Income which ought to be their support, or diminished the Patrimony which in due time they expect to come to the possession

possession of; it is no wonder if, from this time, the very sight of those who ought to be to him the dearest objects in the world, disgust and shock him, — if he dreads to point his steps to his own threshold, as a Criminal after an escape to return to his fetters and his jail.

The low and profligate Company Low Company which a Gentleman of rank and education will frequently submit to keep, rather than lose his beloved Hazard, is such that, if he had been required to admit them simply on the ground of Companions, he would certainly have looked upon it as an insufferable degradation. Those who are no way distinguished in birth, station, or the like, stand in need of personal qualifications, to make them in any degree tolerable in the society of people of the highest ranks. But if any man's personal merit is found to be wholly comprized in the science of the Gaming Table, those who are so much his superiors cannot possibly suffer his company, without inflicting a great punishment upon themselves. Having neither a rank to fill, nor the credit of a family to support, he is free from one very powerful kind of restraints upon the indecencies of behaviour: and he may be led to suppose, that if he observe one or two *professional* points of honour, any liberties that he may take, which are not forbidden by these, can contain nothing ungentlemanlike or dishonourable.

honourable. It must be owned that, if a number of persons engage together in Play, the nature of the thing requires them to be upon a footing of equality in all matters immediately relative to the Play. But, this opening being made, men of no great nicety of feeling will be apt to overlook distinctions, and to use the like liberties in other affairs and on other occasions: which cannot but be grating to their superiors, notwithstanding they endure it through such a blind attachment to these Companions, as prevents their rescuing themselves from the disgraceful Slavery. May we not with good reason pity the man whose Feelings thus constantly jar with each other; while in his reflecting moments he hates or despises those whom again and again he is drawn on to associate with, as if by some power of enchantment in the rattle of the dice? — If we indulge in pursuing this matter to the extreme, we may represent to ourselves a man stripped of all his guineas, reduced to his last shilling, an outcast (for want of money) from White's and Stapleton's, yet so strongly infatuated with the vice of his prosperous days, that he will even condescend to game with the very lowest populace in the open streets.

Such Company
hurts the Reputation.

But the enduring of Impertinence from Inferiors is not the only way in which the Gamester is a sufferer from the

the Company that he mixes with. There are various other ways: — one of them is, the effect upon his Reputation. On this head perhaps he may undertake to brave the World; and say, that what company he chuses to keep is not the concern of any one, — therefore that he shall pay no regard to what any one may be pleased to say upon it. But can he in such a point command his own feelings? Surely not; till by length of time he has worn off a sensibility common by nature (in some degree) to all men. To bear up under a bad name, even among a particular set of persons, or for a *time*, till some facts of doubtful appearance can be cleared up, and when supported too by the consciousness of having done what is right and praise-worthy; — to do even this, is a proof of no small fortitude. But in the case before us, where a man finds himself slighted by his Equals for demeaning himself to keep company with those who are his Inferiors, not only in rank, but in every qualification of a Man and a Gentleman; for a person (not totally abandoned) to boast of indifference in *this* case, is either a downright imposition upon the World, or at best a glaring instance of Self-deceit.

There are yet other ways in which
 a Gamester may suffer by the Compa-
 ny which he keeps. He may fall into the hands

Greater
 Dangers
 incurred.

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of

of men whose character is detestable in a much greater degree than what has just now been supposed; — men devoid of every moral principle, and ready to perpetrate whatever villany may serve their turn. Men of this stamp, either singly or associated in a Gang, will find many opportunities in the connexions of the Gaming Table, for injuring one against whom they may have formed their black designs. For instance, should a Villain of this class entertain a passion for your Wife or Daughter, (such a passion as a Villain's mind *can* entertain;) he will not scruple, though against every dictate of real Affection, to ruin her fortune in order to possess her person; much less will he scruple, in order to this, to ruin you who are her support. Should he think the mask of Friendship conducive to his ends, he can “smile, and smile, “and be a Villain.” Under this mask he will not hesitate to lead you on to any lengths: if repeated losses awake not in you a suspicion of his treachery, he will gradually reduce you to that state which he thinks may enable him to mould you and yours to his purpose. Stripped of your property, and made acquainted with the end he has been aiming at, if you offer resistance or threaten punishment, the consequence may be, that you pay your Life as the last forfeiture to this pretended friend. Nor will a man so complete in villany insist upon risking his own
life

life in order to take yours: you are not to reckon yourself perfectly secure from the baseness of Poison or Assassination.

These are Dangers in the extreme; and are not meant to be charged upon every inferior attachment to the practice of Gaming. And, since it can scarcely be called the direct Cause of them, but is rather to be looked upon as affording *Opportunities* to Villany, I will not stay to point out any other particular Instances: If any thing *else* can be found, so far similar to Gaming, that it will equally expose one to unwary connexions with Strangers, and will produce the same kind of blind Infatuation in an equal degree, *that* also will make one liable to suffer deeply by Villains. They may be said to take possession of the *Man*; and, when they have once got this, they will not be long in making it subservient to their Purposes: but it seems not to fall within the province of this Dissertation, to describe minutely those different Purposes, or the Ways in which they may be executed.

We have seen a large stock of Happiness which the Gamester per-
versely rejects, and plentiful sources
of Misery which he opens upon himself. Will it be said that the actual Pleasure of Gaming is a Compensation to him for all this, and that it is *proved* to be so by the strong Propensity which

Pleasure of
Gaming, not
a Compensa-
tion.

actuates him? The Proof is insufficient. We see persons who have almost lost their senses by Intoxication, more strongly attached to the liquor before them than a person with a natural thirst upon him: and yet it is past a doubt that he has greater pleasure in taking a draught than they have. And there are numberless other instances, in which the Pleasure of enjoying an object seems by no means answerable to the strength of the Propensity towards that object. Therefore the Proof alleged is a fallacious one.

Agitation
by different
Passions.

2. Let us now proceed to examine the manner in which the Gamester appears affected, during the time that he is actually engaged in Play, or afterwards in consequence of it. — And first; independent of the particular natures of the different Passions with which he is agitated, there is a general harm from the *Violence* of the agitations. The enjoyments which are found by experience to constitute the chief happiness of man in this world, are of the placid and moderate sort. We may now and then catch a Rapture of delight: but he that expects any succession of rapturous feelings in the ordinary course of things, shews a great ignorance of human life. Now the feelings of the Gamester, as they depend upon events certainly very interesting if he plays pretty deep, will of consequence be often

often violent in their Degree, whatever be their Kind: and hence, by mere Analogy, arises a strong Conjecture that they will not be such as upon the whole produce much happiness. —

But further, all violent emotions, whether of joy or grief, agreeable or painful, are found to fatigue and harass the mind: which deducts something from the Good they yield when of the agreeable sort, and adds to the Evil of them when painful. Here again therefore is an argument upon general principles, from the *Violence* alone of the Gamester's feelings, to make us suspect that they are not very desirable, notwithstanding the attachment he may shew to his own mode of life.

It may be remarked, before I proceed to mention some particular

Complication
of Passions.

Passions which agitate the Gamester, that he frequently suffers under a *Complication* of Passions; which acting at one and the same time upon the mind, either distract and tear it to pieces by pulling different ways, or, by urging it the same way, drive it to the most outrageous excess. So that, although several Passions will be mentioned separately, it is by no means to be understood as if each of them, always or even usually, exerted itself separately, producing thus a single and distinct effect. The Combinations of different feelings, in the Gamester as in other men, are infinitely va-

ried, and therefore cannot be enumerated; but we shall obtain some idea of them, if we examine several of the principal Passions singly, as the Materials out of which the Compositions are made.

Unwarrantable Hope,

To begin then with one somewhat mild in its nature. The Gamester is apt to indulge himself in Hope, extravagant in its degree, and totally unwarrantable because contradicting Demonstration: — for it does in effect contradict the calculations formed upon the certain principles of mathematical investigation, concerning the probabilities of events in play. Let him but have ten pieces in his pocket, when he enters a Gaming House, and you may see him big with Hopes of making a hundred before he comes out of it. Nay, if he has had such bad luck already as to have gamed away a good Estate, let but Fortune by any means put him in possession of an insignificant sum, and he will be saying in his own mind, “if the dice do but favour me, this may restore to me all my Lands, my Woods, my Mansion House”; and under this phrase, *if* the dice favour me, he will couch a Hope that they *will* do so: whereas in truth such a Hope is not much short of Madness. It will serve little to any other purpose than as a foundation for the most bitter Disappointment. In active life it is otherwise: Hope is a spring

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of Action, and as such, (though it should happen to be stronger than can be justified,) it may enable a person to acquire *something*, however short of what he had hoped for. But in the toss of a Die, there is no call for a man to exert his own powers. He trusts all to Chance, — watching only to nick Fortune, as he terms it : except we include the iniquitous mysteries of the art, which are no more to be reckoned here, than Forgery or other illicit practices would deserve to be reckoned if we were estimating the advantages of Trade. — Will it however be maintained that Hope, while it *is* Hope, is an agreeable feeling, and therefore, whatever it may lead to, cannot be considered as any immediate Evil in itself? I fancy that even this will not hold good. The case is so clear against *such* Hopes, that the man who entertains them can scarcely do it without a consciousness of his folly in so doing. So far as he does really hope, it is a strong instance of Self-deceit : his Hope of Success is a cloak under which he hides even from himself his excessive Love of Play. And we cannot think, that wild expectations like these will yield him the satisfactory pleasure of a well-grounded Hope : they must rather produce, in his breast, a tumult which agitates instead of enlivening ; whilst, having a confused suspicion of his own folly, he fears to turn his eyes inwards in order

to examine it minutely, and rushes on dissatisfied with himself, though affecting a chearful confidence in his Fortune.

Does he succeed far beyond what was probable? Yet we do not find him attaining the Happiness which we naturally suppose to have been his ultimate object. One whom he despises, one whom he pities as a miserable wretch groveling in some mechanical employment, will, in making an equal acquisition of fortune, generally make a much larger acquisition of happiness. Gradual success, with the idea of being one's self the prudent and industrious cause of it, will inspire the mind with vigour and spirits, far above all that can be expected from a few favourable strokes of mere Chance.

Elevation and
Depression.

In common life, a man is much to be pitied who meets with many great and sudden changes of fortune: especially if he shews himself so weak as to be excessively elated with a prosperous turn of affairs, and depressed when they take an adverse turn. This is one light in which we are to view the Gamester. But the greatness of the changes far exceeds what usually happens in life: insomuch that a reverse of fortune which in a Gaming House attracts little notice, will elsewhere command the attention and sympathy of thousands. Indeed the Gamester makes some pretensions to be a Stoic upon these occasions

casions: — I believe, without sufficient ground. Instances there may have been, no doubt; but too rare probably, to merit a place among these general topics. It is, I fancy, much more commonly the case, that the Apathy is confined to the Countenance; — that while the brow is kept smooth and the muscles of the face preserve their situations, the heart answers by natural emotions, if not to every single cast of the dice, at least to any considerable run of good or bad success. But there are many who leave us not thus to a conjecture, about what passes in their breasts: their words, their looks, and gestures are sufficiently expressive; and convince us, that persons who thus wantonly bring themselves into these trying situations, are not free from extravagant exultation in prosperity, and depression in adversity. — How miserable must be the feelings of a man who, after having once or twice reduced himself to poverty and found himself utterly incapable of bearing it with temper, cannot yet suffer himself to be taught a lesson of frugality; but on one more return of success, is weak enough to risque again his new acquisitions, rather than reserve them for the purposes of prudence or honesty!

In spite of the most dear-bought
experience, you may see the Game-
ster returning to his dice as keen as if he
had, in former trials, found his most extrava-
gant

Eagerness and
Impatience.

gant hopes justified. Such a Keenneſs, with a tumultuary Impatience attending it, is itſelf a ſevere but natural and common puniſhment of our undue appetites. And the farther a man has departed from reaſon and prudence in gratifying his appetites, or in creating artificial ones, the more does he expoſe himſelf to this puniſhment. The Gameſter, having deſerted the ample field of enjoyment provided for him by Nature, and pointed out to him by Reaſon, for the ungenial regions of Chance and artificial appetite, has expoſed himſelf in a peculiar manner to be puniſhed inceſſantly in this way. Nay, he is not only hurried on in general by an Eagerneſs for Play; but, what is completely abſurd as well as wretched, when repeated loſſes have brought him near the brink of ruin, he diſcovers an Impatience even to push on to the edge of the precipice, and plunge himſelf into ruin irretrievable. Madneſs like this, is not only the Cauſe of miſery to come, but is preſent and grievous Miſery.

Anxiety. Nearly allied to this Impatience, but nevertheless diſtinct from it, is the Anxiety of expectation in which the Gameſter is ſo often kept ſuſpended. This is an Evil heavily and univerſally complained of in common life. How often do we hear, upon various occaſions, ſuch expreſſions as theſe, "Rid me but of my Suſpenſe," — "*Any* thing were better than

than this state of Uncertainty"? Yet does the Gamester wantonly and perpetually throw himself into situations remarkable for producing this uneasy passion. The situations most apt to produce anxious expectation are those in which, besides the Importance of the event depending, a man cannot by any exertions of his own contribute towards deciding it one way or another, but is obliged to wait the decision in a state of inactivity. Let a man but have room to exert himself, and he may dispel a number of gloomy anxious thoughts, even where he cannot entertain great hopes of final success. But if he should be fixed to a spot, within view of of transactions which deeply concerned him, and should be thus compelled, as it were with his hands tied, to watch the decision of such interesting events; this would be a torture deserving of an Inquisition. Yet the Gamester is even such a hand-cuffed Spectator of his own fate: gaping earnestly after the Dice, to see what faces they will turn up; but incapable (by the rules of fair Play) to do any thing towards bringing up the faces he wishes for. — And it is particularly observable of the passion of Anxiety, perhaps above all others, that a frequent Repetition adds much to its vehemence. This circumstance is found in full perfection at the Gaming Table. No sooner is one state of Suspense brought to an end than

than an other is sought for, with an avidity that might set us upon questioning whether to be anxious were not to be happy: but as soon as the new state of Suspense is entered upon, the avidity to bring this also to an end convinces us of the contrary.

Suspicion and
Peevishness.

In matters so serious as the business of Gaming, it is no wonder that a man should ever be awake to Suspicion. He knows there are Sharpers to be met with; and he dreads to become a Bubble to them, not only on account of his money, but also of his reputation. Nor will he think it impossible for a Gentleman, unblemished in his ordinary character, to be drawn on, as his mind is ruffled by the events which happen in Play, to take some advantages not perfectly fair. Hence, he will sometimes be upon the rack of Suspicion, where he thinks it still necessary to treat with good manners those whom he cannot but suspect. And even where he has not sufficient reason to suspect this or that Individual, he may yet suffer the torment of a suspicious mind, merely from the general idea of being *liable* to unfair Play. In addition to this, let us only suppose that he has bad luck at any particular time; and we shall readily conceive that these together may generate in him a miserable Peevishness. This is a quality which not only makes a man very unpleasant to himself while

while the immediate cause of it exists, but is apt to sour the temper, to introduce habitual fretfulness, and to lay the foundation of numerous disagreeable sensations in one's daily commerce with the world.

Stimulated by Peevishness and Losses, *Revenge*, the Gamester is sometimes weak enough to continue at the Hazard Table under an idea of revenging himself upon those to whom he has lost his money. An idea ridiculous enough to a cool Spectator; but, notwithstanding, a cause of real misery, as well as a vice, in the breast that harbours it. A proper Resentment, that is, a due sense of a real injury sustained, is often attended with some feelings of a pleasing sort, a nicety of moral principle, and an idea of one's own dignity or personal merit. But Revenge, especially if arising without any real injury committed, will make the soul that is conscious of it feel mean and despicable to itself. This is the case of the Gamester, if it be for sums won from him by *fair* Play, that he goes to revenge himself; sensible as he must be that this was no Injury to him. And if he conceive himself to have been preyed upon by Sharpers, he must be aware that the method he takes is wholly unfit to answer even his own mean purpose; since, to continue Play with Sharpers, can only serve to plunge him deeper; and hence, in addition to that meanness of

Feeling

Feeling which attends a spirit of Revenge in general, he feels also the Impotence of his own foolish Method to attain his vicious End.

Under the losses which befall the Gamester, we find him in want of the supports which other persons have to lean upon. Grief, Lamentation, Regret, and Melancholy, have their privilege when they arise from the distresses of unprovoked bad fortune: the Sufferer *then* needs not be ashamed of indulging them, within certain bounds; he derives even a degree of importance from his sufferings, and claims with a good grace the sympathy of the beholders. But the case is very different with the losing Gamester; who with an imprudent levity has thrown himself into the way of Calamities, and has in a manner tempted Fortune to use him harshly. Destitute of approbation from within and from without, he is exposed to the full force of his misfortunes: or, if he meets with some pity abroad, the sense he has of its being unmerited takes much from the strength of that support. In his external appearance indeed he may not always betray his Sorrows: the dread of meeting with a cold indifference to his concerns in those around him, or perhaps drawing upon himself their contempt or ridicule, may sometimes stifle a tear ready to burst from the eye, may force a smile into a melancholy countenance, or suppress the
noisy

noisy exclamations of louder Grief: but all this restraint will produce a most uneasy contention in the breast, which will distract and jade it. And there will also be times, indeed not a few, when these natural marks for expressing the passions will break through all opposition and plainly indicate what passes within. — If repeated losses from the Dice have reduced a man to Poverty, what is the Language in which he regrets his past affluence? Not that of a manly Fortitude, which, having suffered through accidents entirely out of its power, submits with firmness to what will only render it more illustrious; not that of the magnanimous Patriot, who, in some imminent danger of his country, to save it if possible from ruin, has wasted his substance at the same time that he has exposed his person, and at last yields with an unbroken spirit to the calamities of the times; not that of the warm Friend, who, to retrieve the distressed circumstances of some one nearly connected with him, has with an excess of generosity straitened his own. No; he has nothing laudable to plead as the cause of his misfortunes, nothing of even a *mistaken* virtue or generosity, to allege to himself as the motive of his past conduct: he has no public calamity to which he can attribute his losses; nor any private stroke of adverse fortune, except what is intimately involved with
his

his own folly. At one time, his Language is alternately the expression of idle Lamentation and bitter Self-reproach: at another time, he paints to himself his former prosperous state, dwells upon it, contrasts it with his present condition, and seems as if he took some wretched species of delight in tormenting himself with the Comparison. At other times again, he affects to buoy himself up by throwing the blame upon his Companions, upon his Stars, upon the inanimate Dice: but this, at the bottom, is only a different method of regretting that happiness which he has himself spilt upon the ground. All is comfortless: all is the Language of Misery.

Despair,
Horror,
Madness. There is, however, still deeper misery awaiting him, if he stop not short in his career. Let him now, while he has *something* left, while he has some reputable connexions not totally dissolved, and perhaps a domestic establishment which may be kept up though upon a reduced plan, — let him at last open his eyes, and turn his feet to seek the path of Honour and Felicity. Otherwise, when *all* is lost, when Hope is gone, when fortune, reputation, domestic comfort, and peace of mind appear to be fled beyond recall, see what infernal passions seize upon the soul as their lawful prey. Despair lays hold of it, attended by keen Remorse and im-
potent

potent Rage, and vexes it with a torture such as one might have imagined human strength incapable of sustaining; while a confused gloom of Horror, spreading itself over the mind, gives every object of the imagination and of the senses a terrifying aspect. Sunk beneath a load of Shame, he has not courage to look one of his own species in the face, but abandons himself to his internal tormentors, and seems to welcome the exquisite misery which they inflict upon him. In a situation like this, even *Madness* may be acceptable; a dreadful remedy, 'tis certain, and to the Friends of the unhappy Sufferer most grievous and shocking, but to himself probably a degree of relief.

III. Hitherto we have been contemplating scenes which call forth our ^{Harm to others.} Pity for so wretched a Being as a Gamester. Those which are going to open upon us will excite sentiments of a different kind towards him: — he will now appear before us as accountable for the misery which he brings upon *others*.

1. To begin with the fountain ^{Corruption of Principles.} head, let us a little consider the corruption of his Principles; before we enter into any detail of the immediate Effects of his conduct, upon private Persons and upon the Public.

D

Man,

First, in
general.

Man, by the constitution of his nature and by the circumstances in which he is placed, is an active Being. He finds it impossible to sit always still: this object or that will ever be drawing him on to follow it. If, for want of firmness, wisdom, or prudence, he does not uniformly adhere to one grand design or plan, he will at least be pursuing in a more desultory manner a variety of purposes at different times: if objects of Importance do not attach him, Trifles will be found to do it. Hence it appears that, to engage in any Pursuit, is not to do that instead of *nothing*, but instead of some *other* pursuit or pursuits, which would infallibly have engaged more or less the attention. The Gamester cannot go after his Dice, without neglecting something, whatever it be that might otherwise have happened to occupy him during the time that he now gives to Play. — Add to this (what experience teaches,) that a man, by pursuing an object for a length of time, improves gradually or acquires such Habits and Powers as are adapted to it. Hence, in pursuing one object, I lose the opportunity not only of pursuing some other object, but also of attaining those Habits and Powers which would have sprung up during the pursuit of it. For instance, if I give my time to the Gaming Table, I lose the opportunity not only of pursuing; in that time, any virtuous or benevolent purpose

purpose which I might have pitched upon, but also of acquiring those Habits of Virtue or Benevolence which the pursuit itself would have caused to grow up in me. — Again; if we grant that there are still Opportunities for virtuous Habits to be formed, notwithstanding a man's being addicted to Gaming, and if he does actually give a portion of his time to some laudable pursuit, one that has a natural tendency to improve his moral Feelings, yet here also the Spirit of Gaming stands in the way and destroys the hopeful prospect. This it does by its strong Possession of the mind; for which, as a fact, we may appeal to experience. And it is in vain to hope for a harvest of so delicate a growth as that of virtuous and benevolent sentiments, while the passion that rules the soul is one of such strength as the love of Play. This nips every stem in its vegetation, as it rises above the surface, before it has gained sufficient strength to support itself against the many attacks to which it is exposed. — Yet further; it is certain that the moral Feelings require to be exercised, not only in order to be improved, but even to be kept up at that pitch of perfection which they have already attained. Hence, if a person who has hitherto lived irreproachably, should fall under the baneful influence of the Dice, we are not to be surprised at a subsequent Corruption of his Morals. Let no man, however habitual and

regular may have been his attachment to every virtue, flatter himself with a hope that, after he begins to indulge himself in Gaming as a profession or serious occupation, he shall be able long to maintain inviolate his former dignity of character. — Such are the effects of Gaming, towards corrupting the Principles *in general*: but it will be worth the while to see more fully how it robs a man of some particular Virtues, or introduces into his breast some particular Vices.

Infection of
bad Company.

It ought however to be previously remarked, that the *general* Corruption of a man's Principles, which has just been shewn to arise immediately from the very nature of Gaming, is greatly forwarded by the contagious Morals of the Company in which the Gamester mixes. That he does in fact sometimes associate with men of a most abandoned character, and also that such Company has a great influence in weakening every good principle, are points so notorious that it seems sufficient to have just remarked them: especially after what has been said already (a) concerning the Company that he keeps; though it was there referred to a different head.

Idleness and
Extravagance.

To proceed then to some *particular* effects of Gaming, upon the Morals. And first, it tends much to introduce or promote a set of Vices which are often tenderly

(a) Page 31, &c.

derly treated in any censure passed upon them, sometimes perhaps wholly excused, under an idea that they are hurtful to him only who is guilty of them. Among these, the principal seem to be Idleness and Extravagance: and, since they are peculiarly connected with Gaming, both as its Cause and Effect, I shall confine myself, under this set of vices, to the consideration of these two. — As the *Cause* of Gaming, they do not fall within the subject of this Dissertation; though I do not deny that they sometimes *are* the Cause of it. They are also frequently the *Effects* of it. This is applicable to other Vices which will be mentioned afterwards: and indeed it is a very common phenomenon in the moral world, that where any course of action has arisen from any particular sentiments, whether vicious or virtuous, it will afterwards reproduce and heighten the same sentiments; which thus become the Effect of that, of which they were before the Cause. — If any one doubts whether Idleness can be an Effect of Gaming, because the Gamester follows his occupation with great seriousness and intenseness of thought; let him attend a little to the familiar acceptation of the word Idleness, or its opposite, Industry. In the use of these terms, there is commonly some secret reference made to the End and Purpose for which any thing is done. If a man should work hard fourteen hours a day,

in picking straws, he would still be said to be idly employed: nor would the greatest labour and fatigue, undergone in midnight revels or in parties of pleasure, entitle one to the appellation of industrious. The Gamester is powerfully urged on, but to no good End or Purpose; and his Motive may well be described in the expressive words of Horace, "Strenua nos exercet Inertia." But if he is to be called idle in the very heat of what to him is Business, much more in the Intervals of that business; when with jaded faculties, with feelings of disappointment and vexation, and without a desire of doing good to a fellow-creature, he is totally unqualified to set about any work of Industry. — Nor is Extravagance less (than Idleness) the effect of Gaming. The expense to which the practice of Gaming leads, (exclusive of the sums actually lost in Play,) has already been mentioned (a): and though it was then viewed in a different light, namely as prejudicial to the *Fortune* of the Gamester, what was said will be sufficient also for what we are now considering, as it shews the *Vice* of Extravagance to be an effect of Gaming; and therefore it needs not to be repeated here.

These Vices
deserve not the
Lenity they meet
with.

To excuse, or so much as to palliate, these vices, under an idea that they are hurtful to none but him

him who is guilty of them, is an ill-judged Lenity. And it deserves the more to be noticed here, because the same Lenity may perhaps by some be extended to Gaming itself, as well as to these two Vices which are in the train of its pernicious Effects. — The plea is false: a man cannot be idle and extravagant, without injuring others as well as himself. Not to mention singly the several mischiefs which such a one must bring upon those with whom he has connexions, (as that would carry me too far from the immediate subject I am upon;) it may be observed that habitual Idleness and Extravagance unfit a person entirely for the discharge of his duty to mankind. It is not enough for a man to have a few vague feelings of good-will towards his friends, and to have an easy sociable turn in conversation: there is required in the discharge of almost every duty some degree of labour and attention. And it is not to be expected that he whom his own immediate concerns cannot rouse to action or restrain within bounds, should exert or restrain himself for the sake of others: although certainly, to a well-disciplined mind, there is nothing in the discharge of ordinary duties which may not be amply repaid by the pleasure of Benevolence, or by the Consciousness of doing what is right.

I need not fear the same indulgence
to the Vice which comes next to be ^{Selfishness,}

mentioned: — it lies universally, and very deservedly, under great odium. I mean a narrow and contracted spirit, which knows not how for a moment to quit that beloved creature, Self, that it may enter into the breasts of others and sympathise with their joys or sorrows. This undermines all Benevolence; and, in extent like to that generous principle, interferes with all the lower offices of kindness, to which every day gives occasion, as well as the higher duties which occur not so frequently. Such a selfish spirit is entirely of a piece with the spirit of Gaming, and receives a great accession of strength from it. When you have thrown a Main at Hazard, every one who chuses to set any sum upon it declares himself your Enemy, and you are in turn the declared Enemy of every one at whose stake you throw. In the circle of mutual Foes who surround the board, every thing is hostile; at least all that relates to the business of the Table, except an agreement upon certain rules which are their laws of war; and all considerations are taught to give way to Self-interest. The mind of every man is sharpened against his neighbour; and he learns, with a Selfishness shocking to humanity, to rejoice in the misfortunes of those whom Benevolence and a friendly Intercourse would have instructed him to commiserate and relieve. The perpetual exercise of this Selfishness at the Gaming Table,

will

will form it into a Habit, and thereby introduce it into the common actions of a man's life.

Hence he may come to lose by degrees all those sentiments of Tenderness and Compassion, which plead with him in his own breast in behalf of his fellow-creatures suffering under the various Calamities that befall them. His heart is hardened with a general Insensibility; and becomes a prey to that monster, Cruelty. For, in order to be cruel, it is not necessary to have a positive desire of inflicting misery. By far the greatest part of the Cruelty which is to be found in the world, seems owing to such negative qualities as Insensibility, Carelessness, and Inattention to the feelings of others, rather than to any disposition positively vicious. Yet surely it is repugnant to our very Nature, that one human Being should gaze with Indifference on the misery suffered by another. But after a man is once advanced thus far, he will be ready, when his own convenience requires it, to *inflict* the misery himself: — and this forms the essence of Cruelty.

There is however one more sensibility, which, while it continues with a man, will preserve in him some remains of moral principle, or at the least will serve in a degree as a substitute for it: and this is, a sense of Shame. But it is possible even for this to wear off. Let but the Gamester persevere

Hardened
Feelings, and
Cruelty.

Sense of
Shame,
lost.

persevere in his way of life, which is singularly adapted to harden the heart and contract it within itself; and he shall at length become callous to Infamy, or (what is equally bad for the cause of Virtue) shall *act* as if he were so. Absorbed wholly in a passion for one object, a passion against which the world has long exclaimed, and being resolved at all events not to give up the gratification of it, he of course bids defiance to the voice of the world, and resigns all external regard to his Reputation.

Avarice. Avarice seems of all Vices to be the most immediately connected with Gaming, both as its Cause and Effect. That it is a principal Cause, is very generally allowed: but this is to be understood with some distinction. For it is highly probable, from the age and usual dispositions of persons when they begin this practice, that Avarice is not at the first predominant with them. But afterwards it becomes evidently so. — Indeed what is a passion for Play, where the Play is *deep*, but a greedy and inordinate pursuit of the money that is deposited upon the board? And what is an inordinate pursuit of money, but Avarice? — When it is thus become predominant, it must of necessity be a very powerful *Cause* of Gaming: but the growth of it from its infancy to its present strength, is to be looked upon as the *Effect* of Gaming. And it is an effect highly pernicious;
a Vice

a Vice of a most odious kind, and one which every man should be particularly careful not to encourage in himself, since it is remarkable for growing upon a person as he advances in age. It is a hateful sight indeed, to see any one, in his youth or the prime of manhood, who, by keenly and constantly pursuing rouleau after rouleau for a few years, has already hastened this Vice within his breast to a maturity, which would discredit him even when he should be going to drop into the grave through old age. That it is not accompanied with the Penuriousness which in old age commonly attends it, is no proof that it is not Avarice. The description of Catiline by his Historian, "*alieni appetens, sui profusus,*" is no paradox in the present times: and, of the two species of Avarice, this which is mixed with luxury and extravagance in the same person, seems more pernicious than the other, of the penurious sort, which is perhaps more common.

The greediness of Avarice will
 prove a dangerous trial to Honesty. Dishonesty.

I will not pretend to say that Gentlemen, who have been educated to real principles of honour, who have also the dignity of a rank and character to support, may not for a long time, with some internal struggles, resist all assaults from this quarter: but, at least, they *are* dangerous assaults, even to the best fortified. And the
 man,

man, of all the world, proudest of the sentiments which spring from a good Education, or from an idea of Rank and Character, may tremble for his fortitude, if he exposes it voluntarily to such powerful attacks. — But besides that the defence to which he trusts may prove insufficient, he may come even to lose it. To play upon the square, as he is thus far supposed to do, is a road, almost infallible, to Poverty: as has been shewn at large in a preceding part of this Dissertation. Now, when a man feels himself sinking by his own folly into Poverty, with an obstinacy too which prevents all rational hopes of a better turn to his affairs, he will naturally lose much of that sense of Rank which was one part of his security against Dishonesty. In like manner, his sense of Character will be apt to forsake him, when he becomes conscious that his reputation in the world is not what it has been, and is still sinking from bad to worse. And as for the real internal Honesty imbibed from Education, this, deprived of its usual auxiliaries, will not be likely to maintain itself alone amidst that general destruction of moral principles, which has been shewn to be the effect of Gaming. Destitute then of his defence, we see him moreover attacked by a double temptation to unfair practices: he stands in need of money not only as a supply for his wants at large, but particularly as the means of indulg-
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ing that predominant passion whose impulses are in him become stronger perhaps than any other motive of action. — At length, he demeans himself to a conduct which, if it had been proposed to him the first day that he touched a dice-box, he would not only have rejected with the utmost indignation, but would have thought totally impossible for him ever to condescend to. He turns Sharper. He learns to cog a die, to pack cards, and to set a new kind of value upon himself, for his advances in such iniquitous arts. From this time, it is no wonder if his former friends withdraw the confidence they had reposed in him, — if they avoid him as a man capable of every Dishonesty, and of seeking to accomplish his ends, whatever they may be, by the basest means of Treachery and Falshood.

As for those who had *prieviously* abandoned all Honesty and fair Dealing, and have had recourse to the Dice merely as Instruments convenient for committing depredations upon the purses of the wealthy; the villanies of such men, not being the Effects of Gaming, fall not here within my subject. And what the fair Player suffers from such, has been considered before (a).

Besides these principal Vices, there are others which, meeting with their proper food at the Gaming Table, are nourished there and gain strength. Envy will naturally

Envy,
Revenge,
&c.

(a) Page 15, 16.

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&c.

(a) Page 15, 16.

naturally rise at the sight of success in others: nor can it well be restrained to any low degree, when a Competitor is seen to sweep the whole Ring; when he carries home, for the gains of a single Night or Morning, what might serve him, (if he could refrain from risking it in future,) as a fortune for Life. — Revenge has already ^(a) been mentioned as a Passion immediately painful to the breast that harbours it. Here it is mentioned as a Vice. Seen in either light, it appears amongst the pernicious effects of Gaming. But there seems no occasion to enter into it more minutely, than as it was spoken of before. — In like manner, with regard to suspicious, peevish, and fretful Habits of the mind, which were taken notice of before ^(b) as constituting part of the Misery which the Gamester brings upon himself, it seems sufficient to refer to what was said of them there; although, as *Vices* also which are the Effects of Gaming, they could not be entirely omitted here.

Danger to a
Woman's virtue.

I will mention here only one more instance of the bad effects to be apprehended from Gaming, with regard to Virtue or moral Principle. A Woman, who is so imprudent as to engage in deep Play, may bring herself into a situation dangerous to that virtue which is reckoned in her sex the great point of honour. Besides the very great familiarity

(a) Page 45.

(b) Page 44.

liarity with the other sex, which it gives occasion to, (as ceremonies must be laid aside when such important business is in agitation;) there is a more direct danger incurred, when she loses money beyond what she is able to pay. If a man to whom she has lost her money happens to be somewhat libertine in his principles, he will be apt to consider her as capable of discharging the obligation though she has not a shilling to advance. Should she refuse to settle the account in the method which he may suggest, he can threaten to expose her conduct to a set of persons whose good opinion she probably values far too highly; those with whom she is connected in parties of Gaming. Wherefore, notwithstanding his proposal, if complied with, will in reality render her more truly infamous, she may yet be tempted to add vice to vice, in hopes that the whole may remain a secret, rather than endure that degree of infamy which her misconduct in Play would singly have drawn upon her. — Another danger sometimes occurs; under the same head, but somewhat different. There is such an artifice as a man's contriving to lose his money to a Woman, that he may afterwards have a claim to those favours, which are sometimes purchased more directly by money given. If the Woman is already so abandoned as to take part in the contrivance, by encouraging a man to lose his money to her with this

this view, the case is then foreign to our subject; since the Gaming is used merely as a medium through which the intrigue is carried on. But, otherwise, her danger proceeds from the liberties which he may think he is entitled to take, upon the strength of the money that he reckons himself to have advanced: and if he finds her reluctant, he may perhaps fancy he shall be justified in using every art of seduction, in order to obtain that for which he has paid a valuable consideration.

Mischief
to private
Persons.

2. We have seen, then, what the power of Gaming is, to corrupt the moral Principles and vitiate the Mind. But it is necessary to observe more immediately its Effects as produced in *Action*; — to survey the Mischiefs and Distresses which it causes to persons connected with the Gamester, by private or public ties. And first, in *private* connexions.

Domestic life.

The principal mischiefs of this kind are found in *domestic* life. The evil too rises much higher where the Gamester is a Husband and a Father: for which reason I shall insist chiefly upon the harm done by him in those capacities; although unquestionably great Distress may be brought upon a family by an inferior Member of it.

The Wife.

A young Woman, (we may suppose,) of beauty, accomplishments, sensibility, and

and virtue, whose affections have been won by a man that appears every way deserving of them, by marriage resigns into his hands her Person and Property, and intrusts him with the most extensive powers over her happiness, to promote or diminish it. In entering upon her married life, she pleases herself with the prospect of having always one who shall protect her, who shall manage her interests, who shall be to her a Friend, a Companion, nay an object to which most of her actions, even those of every day, shall have some kind of reference. For a time the pleasing idea is continued to her; he shews himself yet the man that he was before marriage; and her experience answers, (I mean, as human affairs *do* answer,) to the expectation. After a while, the prospect suffers some change: she no longer finds, though perhaps she knows not why, the same satisfactory enjoyment in his company; there is something of a coolness in his affections, which damps her joy, in spite of all his efforts to keep up the same external appearance; the very measures taken at his request, or with a view of giving him pleasure, do not produce the desired effect. Presently, she discovers a new attachment which he is forming, or an old one which he has hitherto been able to conceal from her, — the object of it the Hazard Table: an object indeed at which she would have no occasion to be alarmed, were but

its attractions and hers brought into a fair competition, for the free choice of an unvitiated taste; conscious as she must be, without any vanity, of the great superiority on her side. But she finds in fact, contrary to all natural conjecture, that this attachment hurries him on, with a force that bids defiance to all the power of her united charms. In short, the Foundation of her happiness is undermined; and the Superstructure gives way. Had this or that single misfortune befallen her, resources might have been found, in the domestic establishment which she has procured for herself, to remove or alleviate it. But he to whom she had given herself up for life, has proved faithless, and withdrawn himself from his engagements: he who was to have been her comfort in every affliction, is become the constant source from which daily affliction pours in upon her. He breaks her hours of natural rest; or absents himself from her, whole nights; then buries himself in sleep, at a time when she might expect to enjoy his company at the sociable meal, or to see him actively and chearfully employed. — When he has thus far deserted her happiness, and his own; so that he no longer attends to any enjoyment of the sociable intercourse between man and wife; it is no wonder if he begins to neglect her Interests, and to grow careless of that Property to which she looks for a support. She can no longer

longer hope that he will give his time, or exercise his talents, to promote her advancement in the world. She may tremble in expectation of the Poverty, which his folly is likely to bring upon them both; and of the concomitant Infamy, to him who has been the distinguished object of her affections. As the dreadful consequences approach, she must be agitated with the most violent apprehensions of what they are both to suffer, and of the share which their children must bear in the calamity. And, if no happier course of events should take place, than what she has reason to expect, we are to conceive her as condemned to spend the remainder of her days in a hopeless misery; such indeed as nothing in this world can easily be imagined to exceed, unless we should add to the idea the torments of bodily pain, or the stings of a guilty conscience.

The Distresses which the Gamester brings upon his Children, resemble ^{Children.} so much in kind those which he brings upon his Wife, while they are inferior in degree, that a particular consideration of them seems unnecessary. As the Children have probably a longer time to live than their Mother, on this account indeed they are likely to suffer more than she will; but in other respects they appear to have greatly the advantage over her. Their minds, younger and less forcibly attached to him who has been a

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common source of misery to her and them, will be less violently shocked with the neglect he has shewn them, and will more easily *recover* from any shock they may have endured. They have some resources too for repairing their broken fortunes, from which she is entirely excluded: there are ways open to them, in which they may (wholly or in part) make up to themselves, by a proper use of their own abilities, for the losses they have sustained by their father's abuse of his. Still their sufferings are undoubtedly such, that one cannot regard without abhorrence, a man whose ungenerous soul could not be restrained from an absurd passion, by the prospect of such complicated calamities, to be brought upon the most natural objects of his tenderness and care.

Other Relations. If now we suppose it not to be the Head of a Family, but only an inferior Member of it, who is addicted to Gaming; the Distress which his conduct can bring upon the Family, will upon the whole be more limited. Yet are there some peculiar circumstances in it, worth attending to. If we call to mind the duty and respect owing to a Parent, it suggests an additional blame, which appears in the Gamester as a Son. Here is neglect and desertion, not only instead of affection, but instead of filial respect and obedience. And even those members of the family who are
but

but his Equals, may demand something of a greater respect than, in the former case, the Children could insist upon from their Father.

—— Again, the anxious concern of Parents for their Children, is generally found to be stronger than the reciprocal regard of Children for their Parents. A Father who has for years watched with a solicitous eye over the education of his Son, indulging the fondest hopes of his future accomplishments and actions, and who finds at length, for all the fruits of his care, that the Son has given himself over to a Gamester's life, must surely feel the keenest disappointment. Divided between a desire of giving him the proper supplies for every laudable purpose, and a fear that these supplies may be converted into the miserable entertainment of a few days (perhaps a single day) at the Gaming Table, he is all perplexity and hesitation; and is obliged to treat with caution as an Enemy, one whom he hoped to have secured as an affectionate Friend. The prospect too of the Poverty, Infamy, and Misery, to which the Son is likely to reduce himself, when his fortune comes into his own management, and of the consequent Disgrace which may in some degree fall upon the whole Family, will be most melancholy and afflicting to the Father, as he advances into old age. —— This finishes our consideration of Domestic Distresses, or the Misery which the

Gamester brings upon persons in the same Family with him.

Orphans,
and others.

If good principles are so weak in him, if his wants are so pressing, and his passion for Play so strong, that he will endanger the fortune of a Wife or Child; it will easily be understood that any other person's property intrusted to him will find but a slender security. The deceased Parent of a now helpless Orphan, had before his death pitched upon a Friend, as he thought, to whom he might intrust the education and fortune of his Child. This Friend accepts the charge, with some general intentions of doing what is right. But such intentions are a poor defence against the temptations and casuistry of the Dice. I have ruined myself, says he; I have not fifty pieces left, besides this money of the poor Orphan, — which is not my own. I cannot think of taking it to supply the place of my own, which my ill stars have robbed me of. But Fortune has now a long while frowned upon me; she cannot continue to do so always: it is time that she should begin to smile, and a little perseverance in courting her favours may bring her over to my side. I will risque a Trifle of the Orphan's money at the Hazard Table, in order to secure the whole, and that I may preserve myself from being any way tempted to embezzle it to my own use. A slight covering truly! But with it he hides, or shades

shades over, this unjustifiable deed. He risks one trifling sum after another; and when the property of the Orphan has followed his own, he then sees, as in broad day-light, the full villainy of which he has been guilty. — A like fate might attend the fortune of any Relation or Friend, deposited with him; where, besides the sacred nature of the deposit, he was bound by immediate and personal connexions. We have already seen him capable of violating connexions still stronger, in order to indulge his fondness for Play; and therefore arguments need not be used, to shew it possible that he might pay no regard to these.

Nor can we by any means expect
 to find in him a scrupulous attention Creditors.
 to the payment of his Debts. Debts of Honour, indeed, as he calls them, he may be ready to pay, to the utmost of his power: but this forms no presumption that he will pay his other Debts. It is necessary to the life he has chosen, to the gratification of his ruling passion, that he should pay his debts of Honour: if he neglects to do this, no Gentleman will chuse to play with him. But as for the honest Tradesman and Mechanic who, in reliance on his good faith expressed or implied, have delivered the goods, or bestowed the time and labour, which they depend upon for their subsistence; the claims of these he neglects with a cold insensibility, taking an unmanly
advantage

advantage of their situation. And if necessity compels them to be loud in their claims, or to make use of the compulsive process of the Law, to which he would disdain to have driven them, had he indeed possessed the real Gentleman's nice sense of Honour; he is often seen meanly condescending to the contemptible arts of evasion and delay. The Tradesman is kept out of that money which he had designed for the discharge of his own debts, or for purchasing a fresh stock of commodities: and the Mechanic is forced to take up necessaries for the support of himself and his family, either upon credit and with hazard to himself, or upon the disadvantageous terms of purchasing in very small quantities. And if at length they recover their debts, they have suffered, in the Delay, an inconvenience equivalent to the loss of a considerable sum of money, besides the actual expense of their proceedings at Law: — but it frequently happens that in the end they lose also the whole or part of what is owing to them. Hence sometimes the ruin of men in the lower ranks of life. It must be allowed that a person in Trade may commonly sustain a single loss of this kind without total ruin or bankruptcy; but the contrary will often be the case, when this co-operates with other unfortunate circumstances: and, whatever be the event, the Gamester has at least contributed *his* share towards the ruin of the Tradesman;

man; who, if he stands his ground, does it by means of better payment from those who have a nicer sense of justice, or by means of his good fortune in some other respects. Surely this man of boasted honour would do well to reflect, that he cannot possibly bespeak the Tradesman's goods, or engage the Mechanic in any work, without at the same time virtually passing his word of honour for their payment; and for such payment too as shall not suffer diminution through unreasonable delays, or through any incidental expense occasioned by *his* fault. If he has any doubt of this, let him consider for one moment what would be the case if, before they undertook to supply his wants, they could be informed how the event would turn out. Can he suppose that in such case they would be ready to serve him? Most clearly, not. It is, in their ideas and in equity, an absolute Condition of what they do, that they should receive an equivalent. And, as the general course of things does not allow of their fully securing beforehand the performance of the Condition; to avail himself of this disadvantage under which they labour, is the dishonourable conduct of a mean, contracted, and dastardly spirit. — Another kind of Creditors may suffer very deeply, should they unhappily be entangled with any one who is under the dominion of the Dice: — those who by frugality and industry have accumulated a
sum

sum of money ; and who have happened to place it in his hands upon Interest, believing his security better than they will find it, and trusting as well to the Interest for a constant supply, as to the Principal for a resource upon great occasions. That he will make free with such a deposit as this, after his Principles have been corrupted and his Fortune wasted by repeated Gaming, is not to be doubted. And the consequent Distress which will come upon these unhappy Creditors, is too evident to require a particular description.

— There is yet another kind of persons whom the Gamester may injure in their Property, but who will scarcely meet with the same compassion as those already mentioned : and these are his Companions in Play. Notwithstanding his professions of honour, and even his real desire of keeping upon reputable terms with these Companions ; yet temptations may be so strong, or the agitations of his mind may have so deprived him of self-command, that after he has gone to the extent of his fortune, he shall yet, beyond this, venture to play upon Credit. If upon such a venture he again loses, and thus contracts a debt which he is not able to discharge ; here is certainly a clear act of Injustice, though committed against those who might be apt to do the same in the same situation. And, as the Instance is doubly connected with our Subject, (the one person committing the injury, and the other suffering

fering it, each through his own Gaming,) there seemed to be a propriety in the mention of it, although the Distress produced can by no means call for our extraordinary commiseration.

Friendship, in its pure state, has ever been considered as the growth of a vir-^{Friends,} tuous soil. Therefore it cannot be expected to flourish in a mind which is constantly vitiated by the exercise of the worst passions, at the Gaming Table. The singular tendency of the practice of Gaming, to harden, to contract and close up the heart, is in direct opposition to the soft emotions, the open, generous, and enlarged sentiments of Friendship. If your Friend gives himself up to a life of Gaming, there is an end presently to the reciprocation of those feelings which, unless they *be* reciprocal, will begin in *your* breast also gradually to wear away. And thus does *his* attachment to the Dice shut you out from one of the principal sources of more refined pleasure, to which mankind have access. But this is not all. If you expect at his hands any of the grosser kind of services, which even a more vulgar friendship demands; that you may not prepare a disappointment for yourself, you are to look for them only in subordination to the prior claims of the Dice. Is it a portion of your Friend's Time that you ask, or the Loan of a sum of Money, or his Attention, Labour, or Advice? These you can hope for
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at the best, only if the Time is not wanted for a Party at Hazard, if there is not occasion for the Money to stake at the Table, if the fatigues and bad success of Play have not unfitted him for every exertion, or if the eager expectation of it, and the impatient hope of better success, have not preoccupied all the powers of the mind, Your experience of a few instances of this kind, will shew you in what light he sees the duties of friendship: and when the evidence against him becomes so strong that he can no longer keep up appearances, a dissolution of the friendship follows; from which time you entertain towards him, and he towards you, sentiments much more irksome than towards indifferent persons, and the once happy connexion may perhaps end in the most displeasing or even fatal Quarrel. —

— Let two persons, who call themselves Friends, be supposed to meet at the Gaming Table; and let any one judge, (from what has been said of the Gamester's character at large,) whether the intercourse between them is likely to be, in any degree, of a friendly nature. Or let him form his judgement from what he may see but too often in a common game at Cards, which is meant for mere recreation. Let the little excesses of the passions, which he there observes, be magnified in a due proportion; the difference being considered between the sums usually ventured there, and what are known to be

be sometimes ventured in deep Play. He will easily conceive that, where instead of a shilling a stake of fifty guineas is placed upon the board, all the generous sympathy and regard for each other's interest, usual between friends, will be converted into the most unfriendly competition; and the one will not only submit to accept his own good fortune through the Ruin of the other, but will learn even to *rejoice* at that ruin, and, like an infernal Being, to smile where he should weep.

3. Our next inquiry is, the Mischief which Gaming occasions to the *Public*.

Mischief to
the Public.

One way in which it does harm to the Public, is by counteracting that useful distinction of men into different orders, which the common course of things introduces, and which Civil Society finds it expedient to maintain. The professed Gamester is reputed, from his profession, a Gentleman; though his birth, education, and fortune should not entitle him to the appellation. He is received amongst his Superiors upon a footing of equality, and acquires a habit of mixing with them, on that equal footing, with ease and confidence. But this confusion of ranks is prejudicial to the Community, by its effects both upon the higher ranks and the lower. There is a turn of thought suited to each rank singly, which leads a man to
act

Confounding
of Ranks.

act in it habitually with a certain propriety and decency. And a person of high rank can scarcely degrade himself to those who are greatly his Inferiors, and admit them to a constant familiarity, without at the same time degrading his mind to the level of their ideas, or at least sinking it much below the level proper for his own. Exceptions, no doubt, there will be; we must not pronounce *all* men in the inferior ranks, unfit to be admitted among their Superiors: but the exceptions will not be such characters as we have seen that of the Gamester to be; and we need not hesitate to affirm, that the society of such is totally improper for those who are to fill the highest orders of the State. — Again, the effect upon the *Inferiors* also, in this familiarity between very distant ranks, deserves to be watched by the Public with a jealous eye. By means of the connexion, they become so conversant with ideas of Affluence and Independance, and ideas following in the train of these, that they begin to despise and desert the humbler notions better suited to their own condition: they receive a wrong Bias, and are disqualified from serving the Public in their inferior but necessary stations.

Sudden Changes
of fortune.

And the Evil is still greater, when, by the sudden and irregular transfer of property occasioned through the Dice, men are actually raised or depressed into a new rank. Conceive a man placed in an eminent situation,

situation, and possessed of suitable qualifications which he has gradually acquired; who with these powers is able to render the most essential services to his Country, either by discharging some office of distinction and importance, or by promoting industry, peace, and good order in some extensive district where he resides: — if such a man be deprived of his estate and his independence, he is (comparatively speaking) lost to the Public. The Powers which he had of doing Good, are annihilated; and he cannot immediately substitute others in their place: — to say nothing, at present, of the mischievous courses to which he may be driven: Were his powers of doing Good transferred with his property, the calamity would be only private: but this is so far from being the case, that the acquisition of the property by others is often another separate harm to the Community. If it is acquired by a person of much inferior rank; though he should, by miracle, after he has commenced Gamester, return to a discreet use of money, still he is unqualified, by education and habit, to fill the situation into which he is raised; and the Public is injured by his being taken out of his proper sphere. But if this person of inferior rank be moreover of the fraternity of Sharpers, or the scarcely less odious one of Usurers, the acquisition to the Individual appears immediately as a Curse to the Community,

munity, it being the acquisition of so much power to do Mischief.

Although the Gamester and the Commerce.

Trader have the same object, Gain, yet the spirit of Gaming and that of Trade are directly opposite to each other; and nothing perhaps could more effectually ruin the Commerce of a nation, than an universal prevalence of Gaming. It is therefore with the greatest reason, that the Legislature of this kingdom has shewn itself anxiously solicitous to remove the spirit of Gaming from all commercial transactions. Insurances have been encouraged and protected by the Law, so far as they are serviceable for the purposes of Trade, and the security of Property; but have been prohibited wherever, stepping beyond this line, they have advanced into the province of Gaming: as, double Insurances, and those where the Party insured has no Interest in the event on which the Insurance is made. — Contracts relating to the sale of Stock in the public Funds, are regulated by the same leading idea. Where they are made for the *bonâ fide* transfer of property, they are supported by Law; but where they degenerate into Gaming and Wagering, there they begin to be unlawful. — There is a peculiar propriety in the punishment which the Law inflicts on those who, while they wish to obtain the advantages provided for Bankrupts, in favour of Trade, have

have been throwing away their money in the unthrifty ways of Gaming. They are precluded from all those advantages, if they have lost at any one time five pounds, or in the whole a hundred pounds, within a year before they became Bankrupts, by any manner of gaming or wagering whatsoever. — The Traffic by which property is transferred in the way of Lottery, has been particularly combatted by the Legislature. All Lotteries (not specially authorised by Act of Parliament) are declared to be, what Gaming Houses are at Common Law, namely, public Nuisances. A number of inventions, contrived for evading the intent of the Legislature, have been pursued through their windings and iniquitous subtleties, by a variety of Statutes. In these Statutes we find a particular attention paid to the Trade of the kingdom; which is commonly alleged as a principal reason for the provisions enacted: and the Lotteries are treated under the notion, and indeed under the appellation, of Games. Throughout the whole this very just idea prevails, that though men should be weak enough to trust the improvement of their money to schemes which depend upon mere Chance, instead of employing it in Trade, it is for the public good that they should be restrained from doing so. And it seems worth remarking, that the line is not so drawn as to exclude all appeal to Chance in the transfer of

F Property,

Property, but only in cases where it is idle and unnecessary : which appears both from the general countenance given by the Laws to Commerce, where risque is of course to be run ; and particularly from an Act of 12 Geo. 2. (made expressly against excessive and deceitful Gaming,) which confirms all legal partitions of property made by the method of Lots. —

In the Lotteries specially appointed by Act of Parliament, the Legislature has still been very careful to prevent a spirit of Gaming from spreading among the people. To this purpose are various regulations respecting Lottery Offices ; intended to prevent all adventuring with Tickets, except such as shall necessarily arise from the real and fair sale of the Tickets.

Time and
Talents oc-
cupied.

Let us now consider what character the Gamester (as a member of civil Society) is entitled to, from the use he makes of his Time and Talents. A Society is upheld by the joint action of the Individuals : and, if we should conceive a number of Individuals concerting beforehand a plan for a Society, to be entered into by formal contract, it is evident that no person would be admitted who should refuse to contribute his share to the support and welfare of the Community. Upon this principle, the Gamester's claim to the benefits of Society must fall to the ground. He has neither Time nor Talents at the service of
the

the Public; these are otherwise occupied: therefore he cannot possibly fulfill any such engagements, as would have been made the necessary conditions of his admission into Society upon a pre-concerted plan. (But this assertion, as many others throughout the Dissertation, must be understood only in the *degree* in which a man gives himself to the practice of Gaming; and cannot be taken in its *full* extent, except where he makes it his whole or principal business.) — It is nowise probable that *he* should be a steady and faithful servant to the State in any public capacity, whose governing passion is so strong as to hurry him beyond all rules of prudence, and to overcome the influence of all private connexions. We have seen that *these* cannot command his Time and Talents; and therefore there is no hope that the more general and abstracted consideration, of a Country's Good at large, should have that effect. — Nor can we expect from him the duties, even of a private Citizen. A constant regard to peace and good order, a general sobriety of behaviour, a regular employment of some sort which may tend to the public good, (if not immediately, yet through the medium of private interest;) — these are points in the character of the good Citizen, which it is in vain to look for in the Gamester; tossed about in a tumult of restless passions, and having his

attention ever directed to the one grand object of the Gaming Table.

But it frequently happens that he does
 Crimes. not stop in this degree of blame, the being merely useless to the Community. He may easily be led on by the gradual decay of his fortune, together with the gradual corruption of his principles, to the commission of very heinous crimes. Let us conceive him to be reduced to the brink of ruin, by Play repeatedly unsuccessful, or by the fraudulent dexterity of Sharpers: — what course shall he take to retrieve his finances? Shall he manfully quit at once all pretensions to that more affluent state from which in effect he is fallen, and form himself to industry and frugality? This is much more to be wished than expected. This were not the exercise of a *moderate* virtue; such as is sufficient to carry a man reputably through life, so long as he treads the smooth ground of success and plenty. And as for a more exalted and heroic kind of virtue, it would be a folly to look for that in a class of men such as Gamesters are. — Shall he push forward in the path in which he is at present, play upon Credit as well as live upon Credit, and run the risque of entangling himself in a multitude of fetters; in hopes that matters *may* turn out otherwise, and that he may recover his money in the way in which it has been lost? Perhaps

haps this is out of his power: perhaps his situation is too well known, for any person to venture Play with him upon such terms. Or he may possibly have a regard for his reputation in the society of Gamesters, which may prevent his *playing* upon Credit; though he should have lost that regard for it elsewhere, which should prevent his *living* upon Credit without a prospect of discharging his debts. — Shall he then seek a remedy by commencing Sharper in his turn; and attempt to repay himself out of the pockets of those who are acting the same imprudent part that he has been acting? Great difficulties may occur here also. He may be hitherto a stranger to the management of the Die, and the nimble conveyance of a Card, with other arts and artifices of the Sharper; which he may not be able to learn in so short a time as will answer his purpose: and the dread of a detection in a gaming circle, may operate more powerfully upon him than the dread of the Gallows. — He has recourse therefore to those acts of fraud or violence, which will forfeit his life to the injured Public. The Merchant, or the Banker, is exposed to a fraud by Forgery; which may at a single stroke deprive him of a large sum, essential to the prosperity of his affairs, and (in consequence) to the welfare of many who are connected with him: or he may suffer an equal loss by the secret plunder of a necessitous Gamester,

who happens to have access to his cash or paper money. And every member of the Community is liable to lose his property, and this often not without terror, and danger to his person; to supply the losses of a Miscreant, who now infests the public highway or breaks into a Dwelling-house.

Political
Mischief.

Although the Crimes just mentioned are to be considered as offences against the Public, there are other offences which in a more immediate manner have the Public for their object; and such as deserve our notice more especially on another account also, that is, because the opportunities of committing them lie more open to the *higher* ranks, amongst whom the practice of Gaming has been more prevalent than amongst others, and more pernicious. We have reason to dread the fate of the public money, if intrusted to one whose rapacious hand is not restrained by considerations of Prudence, Reputation, Friendship, natural Affection. Will the mind that breaks through all these restraints, be swayed by a philosophical regard for the welfare of an ideal body, the body politic? Even if we should allow such a paradox as any remains of patriotic fire, in a breast in which every other noble and generous flame is extinguished, its strength can be but small: and the accumulation of sordid Passions which, like a load of heterogeneous matter, choak it up, will

will hinder it from diffusing any effective heat. But there is something of a shadow of reasoning, by which a man not abounding in honesty, and yet not *totally* devoid of it, may argue himself into the commission of a public theft. The sum, he says, lodged in my hands, is very large: the portion of it which I want, as the means of turning the tide of my Luck at the Gaming Table, is very small. If my hopes should even fail me, the loss of so small a portion will never be felt by so large a body as the whole Community: — but I will suppose no such thing. No; I feel the strongest forebodings of my returning good fortune: I will borrow for a single day what may be of such essential service to me, and I will honourably return it when it has answered so good a purpose. With these words of shallow honesty in his mouth, and with sacrilegious hands, he seizes that small portion. His persevering ill fortune, or a Sharper, strips him of that too. The same deceitful reasoning is repeated; — again, and again. It grows more complicated: a further sum must now be taken, for the mere purpose of *Honesty*, — to repay to the Public what has already been lost; and a Discovery too is by the same means to be prevented. Besides, the greater are the sums already taken, the less proportion will an additional one bear to them; and therefore the less scrupulous does one need to be about taking it. Thus, it is easy to see,

the public treasure may be thrown away upon the most idle of all purposes : and since the expense is of that particular nature which scarcely knows a limit, we cannot by any means flatter ourselves, according to the deceitful reasoning of the Plunderer himself, with an idea that the loss to the Public will be inconsiderable. — But there are other ways for immediate injury to be done to the Public, still originating in the pernicious practice of Gaming. It is one requisite in a Servant of the State, in any high department, that he be possessed of a substantial Property : which may prevent such a rigid attention to the minuter profits of the Place he holds, as would divert him from the Duty of it; and which may also connect him with the Public in one common interest, so that his private Security and Prosperity shall be interwoven with those of the Public, and that every national danger shall be seen as a danger to *him* in his individual capacity. According to this idea, the Gamester is a very unfit person to serve the State in any high Office. For, if he is not already reduced in his finances, the astonishing rapidity with which the Dice, and those who are dextrous in handling them, make their depredations, is such, that there is no sufficient ground for depending upon the Continuance of his property, howsoever great it may be at present. His Wealth being gone, his Independence follows

lows it: he is no longer, in effect, whatever he may be in appearance, a direct Servant of the State, but a Slave to its Servants. It is probably no secret to those who are joined with him in the Ministry, that the profits arising from his Office are become absolutely necessary to him. And hence he must not dare to act the part of a faithful Servant, proposing with boldness, and supporting with firmness, such measures indifferently as appear to him most conducive to the public Good: he must receive hints from his Superiors in power, and give a forced countenance to such measures as the Ambition or bad Policy of those Superiors may happen to dictate. — But why do I speak of his yielding a *forced* assent to pernicious measures? He himself will lead the way, should it be in his power, and likely to answer his private ends. A man of desperate fortune, if he is moreover a man of desperate principles, like the complete and confirmed Gamester, will expose thousands of his Fellow-citizens to impoverishment, will lay a whole Nation open to ruin, for the chance of replenishing his own private treasury. He will plunge his Country into the calamities of war, in hopes of reaping benefit from some Contract with Government, or of making some Office which he occupies more lucrative to him; and will behold, not only with Insensibility, but with the gay insulting look of Prosperity, that

Mischief

Mischief to the Public which has arisen from his most pernicious course of life.

Two Points reserved.

IV. Nothing remains now but two Points, which might indeed have been introduced sooner, being sufficiently connected with what has gone before, but seemed as if they would with greater propriety be reserved for a separate consideration. They are, Duels, and Suicide. These, if taken at large, would furnish ample matter for disquisition; but, as belonging to our Subject, they will *not* call for a minute enquiry into them.

1. The Gamester is apt to pique himself upon his principle of Honour; — certainly with very little reason, if the representation we have given of him throughout, is a just one. The principle of Honour, in its undepraved state and in its full extent, is a quality of infinite worth, and an aid to every Virtue. But unfortunately its operation has, by a pretty strong party in the world, been confined to a narrow compass; and has been made, above all, to attend upon one single Virtue, which is, Courage. And this Virtue, in conjunction with that very imperfect principle of Honour, has moreover, by the same party in the world, been enlisted in some services to which neither other Virtues, nor the genuine and enlarged principle of Honour, can give any countenance

tenance. These particulars can only be hinted at here: a discussion of them would lead us too far from our Subject. It seems rather to be our business to examine whether Gaming be not a fruitful source of Quarrels and Duelling, and to point out the harm it produces by means of them.

In the first place, Gaming has a general tendency to promote a quarrelsome Disposition, by its effect on the mind and temper. The exercise of the Gaming Table excites such passions as put a man off his guard and prepare him for taking offence at the most trivial matters. Eager and impatient to be shaking the box, to lay down, to take up money, to do he scarcely knows what; anxious for the fate of sums depending, which, accordingly as the Dice decide, will make him a rich man or a poor one; elevated beyond the bounds of sober courage by a run of good luck, or made peevish by bad luck; preyed upon by suspicion of malepractice in those with whom he has associated himself, and stung with envy at the prizes carried off by the fortunate; — agitated and heated by such passions as these, he is ready to catch fire from the smallest spark; and having lost his self-command, he is not in a situation to extinguish the unmanageable flame. The frequency with which these emotions are raised, will have a lasting effect upon his Temper; which will both add to the immediate

mediate strength of the passions, as excited directly in Gaming, and will incline a man to a captious and quarrelsome behaviour in the common affairs of life.

In the next place, Gaming, after it has thus prepared a Disposition for quarrelling, is also very fertile in *Opportunities*. The most obvious occasion it affords, is Money lost in Play, and the Payment of it refused, evaded, or deferred. But this is not the whole. At the Gaming Table, men meet as the avowed enemies of each other. And where concerns of such moment are in hand, a person will let no circumstance of the business escape his attention: all superfluous ceremony ceases; the rules of complaisance, (which may be called a system of artificial virtue,) so useful in ordinary life towards preserving the peace of the world, must often be made to give way. The least suspicion of unfair play, an untoward appearance from something that in reality is but accidental, may cause a hasty assertion, which when made is to be supported by the point of the sword: while, in the Adversary, the consciousness of having played fair, or a different view of a matter of accident, may produce as hasty a contradiction of the assertion, and cut off all hopes of accommodation. — If on these grounds a man is to expose his Person and his Life, it is evident, from the numerous occasions of Quarrel arising among Gamesters, that
upon

upon the whole it is no contemptible danger which is incurred.

But further, if a Gentleman of rank and consideration be drawn in to play with a low and worthless Gambler, and if, in consequence, he should be reduced to fight with such a person, there is a glaring impropriety in the difference between the two lives staked upon equal terms. And if this difference should not be so readily allowed with regard to the Individuals themselves, with regard to the Public it is surely undeniable. It is very unwise in the Community to permit, (if the thing be in its power to prevent,) that the life of one of its Members, who by his situation and powers is capable of rendering services to it of a superior kind, should be set against the life of one who by his abandoned character is sunk even below the level of the populace. — Besides, it is contrary to the public Good, that *any* Lives should be risked, except where some sufficient cause requires it. But in the present case, there is not merely no sufficient cause; the practice of Gaming, which has given occasion to it, is not simply indifferent; it is itself on other accounts prejudicial to the Public, and that in a high degree, as has been shewn at large: so that we have here an accumulation of one Mischief upon another. — And therefore it is with great reason that the Legislature has taken particular notice of Quarrels

rels derived from this origin. One of the principal Acts against Gaming (9. Ann. c. 14.), has provided a special punishment for every Violence done to the person, and for all Challenges given, on account of any money won by Gaming.

We may further conceive a distress to the Family and Friends of the Gamester, arising from a continued Apprehension of the dangers incurred by him. — To this must be added, in some cases, an Apprehension of a circumstance which may prove to themselves a cause of many inconveniences, and of mutual discord, throughout their lives: I mean the circumstance of his leaving his affairs embarrassed and perplexed, by the suddenness of his death. And though there are, without doubt, many chances which give a hope that this calamity may never befall them; yet it is of such magnitude, that the *Apprehension* of it is natural, and of itself a considerable Evil suffered.

2. We come now to the last in the *Suicide.* long train of pernicious Effects, which that most pernicious Cause, Gaming, presents to our view; — the tragical deed of Self-murder. It is an act which, exclusively of all reasoning upon it, shocks the very first principle implanted in human nature, that of Self-preservation. And, when examined into, it shews itself, in the Gamester, to be a mean and cowardly escape from the complicated difficulties in which

which he has involved himself; a treacherous desertion of those persons to whom he has been bound by the strongest ties of Duty, Interest, and Affection; and a crime of the highest order against that Community, which has taken into its immediate care the Lives of all its Members.

- That a man stripped of his Fortune and Reputation, who has stopped up the natural sources of his own Enjoyment, whose Mind is harassed by the most tormenting Passions, who is conscious of having deeply injured those that might have expected far other treatment from him, who cannot look back upon his past life without the sharpest remorse, and can scarcely discern one ray of hope enlightening the prospect of what is to come; — that such a one should be willing to resign his life and to compound for the quietness of a silent grave, is not surprising. But then it must be carefully remarked, that his choice is here supposed to be made from the consideration of his *own* happiness only, excluding the interests of those whom he basely deserts; and also without extending his views to what may befall himself after death. And yet, in this very limited supposition, there is room to doubt whether his choice is well made. The great difficulty would be that of his returning to a virtuous and regular conduct: but, if he *does* return to such a conduct, we can by no means despair of his regaining, even in this life,
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some humble degree of felicity. Be this as it may, it is more to our purpose to observe that the situation of a Gamester, reduced to extremities, and abandoned in his principles, is replete with temptation to the horrible crime of Suicide. — And what is thus probable from the nature of the thing, is confirmed but too strongly by the melancholy experience of the present times; which exhibit to us numerous instances of men who do in fact yield to such temptation, shocking as it is, and unnatural.

It may seem a vain hope, that any consideration of the Interests of others, any sense of Duty towards them, should restrain him who is not deterred by the dismal prospect of the gulph into which he is going to plunge. Yet who can know whether some latent remains of Generosity in the Gamester's soul may not be worked upon by such motives? And if not, yet let the blame fall upon the guilty; and let not him who undertakes to represent the pernicious effects of Gaming, omit in despair such weighty considerations. — Let the Gamester then, who is meditating this escape from the troubles which oppress him, turn his eye for a moment to the distresses of others; the distresses which his unmanly desertion may bring upon those who have the misfortune to be connected with him. He is probably aware that, by the laws of this country, Suicide causes a forfeiture of all his personal property to the

the supreme Power of the State. And although an excessive tenderness in a Jury may induce them to bring in a favourable verdict, such as shall prevent the forfeiture from taking place, yet this is what he can by no means depend upon: and, at the best, it is to that tenderness in the Jury, not to *his* prudence or virtue, that his Relations are indebted for this property after his death.

But it may be said, that the property of a Gamester, in the circumstances we are speaking of, is nothing; or too small to deserve our attention. That indeed may frequently be the case; and let that case be now supposed: there are left still some motives, very powerful over a generous mind, to keep it from deserting its station. — A Widow's condition is usually considered as forlorn and destitute: to become a Widow by the hand of the Husband himself, must double the misery of every disconsolate idea arising out of such a condition. For, in other instances, after time has a little worn down the edge of that affliction which is caused by the loss of a beloved friend, we often see the survivor cherish a thought of the deceased person, with a degree of Pleasure mixed with Regret. But in the instance before us, every recollection of the person deceased is attended with a shock that suppresses all agreeable emotions. — Further, when a man has reduced his family to

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poverty by the vices of a Gamester, he cannot be considered as at liberty to separate his own interests from theirs: he lies under an obligation to exert himself to the utmost in their behalf, — to give his time, his labour, and all his faculties, in order to reinstate them if possible in their former situation, or afford them such relief as he finds to be in his power. All this Duty we see neglected by him who, in such a situation, cuts short the thread of his own life. Thus, forgetful or regardless of what others suffer, and attentive only to his own feelings of distress, he betrays, in such a step, a meanness of spirit which but ill accords with those high principles of honour, vainly boasted by the Gamester. Will a man allege that he is single, — that his death will leave no disconsolate Widow, no distressed Children? This may somewhat alleviate, but can by no means justify, the act of Suicide. Perhaps he has staked at the Gaming Table the money of some Orphan or Friend, deposited with him, or what was in strictness the property of some needy Creditor, and by his death would leave them without hope of recovering their right. The obligation under which he lies to discharge these debts, is in effect an obligation to preserve his own life, as the necessary Means of discharging them. — But should it happen that there exists no immediate claim of this kind upon him, yet surely a
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man of Honour will be strongly influenced by an idea of the Disgrace, which a Death procured by his own hand may bring upon his family or near relations. It were far better he should make it the business of his life, to wipe off the Disgrace he has already brought upon them, than that he should add to it the irretrievable one of an infamous death. — What was said under the Head of Duels, concerning the distress to a man's Friends, arising from the continued *Apprehension* which they are under, is so applicable to Suicide that it seems sufficient to refer to it^(a): only we may add, that the Evil seems greater in the present case; both because the dreaded event is perhaps more likely to happen, and because it is somewhat more shocking in its nature.

In this final act of the Gamester, we see him transgressing once more against the Community, to which his Life has been so highly injurious; — presuming to exercise a power to which no Authority upon earth, besides that Community, is competent. Whether his crimes are such as call for a punishment by death, is for the Public to decide; and to the Public he himself has committed all such questions, by putting his life under the protection of the laws. After this, he has not a right to take away his own life, any more than that of another member of the Society. To take away the life of another,

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is unquestionably one of the most heinous offences against the Public; and has been commonly treated as such by the laws of different Nations. And if the taking away of one's own life has this peculiar circumstance attending it, that it eludes whatever an offended Public can inflict as a direct Punishment, it will appear to a great and generous mind, not to be on that account the less culpable. But since the mind of the Gamester is the reverse of all that is great and generous, or gradually sinks into that character, he is not the man in whom we are to look for so refined yet so just a conception. And if with his *Character* we combine the distressed *Situation* to which he is liable to be reduced, the whole will lead us to expect from him, more perhaps than from any other person, this cowardly, monstrous, and destructive Crime.

THE END.



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